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DIRECTIONS

AND

PERSWASIONS

TO A

Sound Conversion.

FOR

Prevention of that Deceit and Damnation of Souls, and of those Scandals, Heresies and desperate Apostasies, that are the Consequents of a Counterfeit, or superficial Change.

By *Richard Baxter.*

The Last Edition.

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The PREFACE.

IT is a weight so unconceivable that dependeth on the soundness of our Conversion and Sanctification, that our care and diligence cannot be too great to make it sure. As the professed Atheist, Heathens, and Infidels without; so the self-deceiving Hypocrites within the Church, do wilfully cast away themselves for ever, by neglecting such a business of everlasting Consequence; when they have time, and warnings, and assistance to dispatch it. Multitudes live like Bruits or Atheists, forgetting that they are born in sin and misery, and setled in it by wilful Custom, and must be Converted or Condemned. These know not (many of them) what need they have of a Conversion, nor what Conversion or Sanctification is. And some that have been Preachers of the Gospel, have been so lamentably ignorant in so great a matter, that they have perswaded the poor deluded people, that it is only the gross and hainous sinners that need Conversion; branding the al-

with the name of Puritans, that will not take a dead profession joyned with Civility, for true Sanctification; and promise Salvation to those, that Christ hath with many asseverations professed, shall not enter into the Kingdom of God. Others that confess that a through Sanctification is a necessary thing, do delude their Souls with something that is like it. Hence is the misery and dishonour of the Church. Holiness it self is disgraced by the sins of them that are unholy, because they pretend to that which they have not. Hence it is, that we have thousands, that call themselves Christians, that live a worldly, fleshly life, and some of them hating the way of Godliness, and yet think they are Converted, because they are *sorry* when they have *sinned*, and wish when it is *past*, that they had not done it, and cry *God* mercy for it, and confess that they are sinners; and this they take for true Repentance: When sin was never mortified in their souls, nor their hearts ever brought to hate it, and forsake it: but when they have had the profit and pleasure of sin, they are sorry for the danger.

ger, but never regenerate and made New Creatures by the Spirit of Christ. Hence also it is, that we have such abundance of meer Opinionists, that take themselves for Religious people. Because they have changed their Opinions, and their Parties, and can prate contentiously against those that are not of their mind, and joyn themselves with those that seem to be the strictest, they take themselves to be truly Sanctified: And this makes such gadding from one opinion to another, and such censuring, reviling, and divisions upon that account, because their Religion is most in their Opinions, and hath not mortified their carnal, selfish inclinations and Passions, nor brought them to a holy, heavenly mind. Hence also it is that we have so many sensual, scandalous Professors, that seem to be Religious, but bridle not their *tongues*, their appetites, or their lusts, but are *Railers*, or *Back-biters*, or *Tipplers*, or *Gluttons*, or *filthy* and lascivious, or some way scandalous to their holy Profession, because they are strangers to a through-Conversion, but take up with the counterfeit of a superficial

change, Hence alſo we have ſo many worldlings, that think themſelves Religious men; that make Chriſt but a ſervant to their worldly intereſts, and ſeek Heaven but for a reſerve, when Earth forſakes them, and have ſomething in this world that is ſo dear to them, that they cannot forſake it for the hopes of Glory; but give up themſelves to Chriſt, with ſecret exceptions and reſerves, for their proſperity in the world: And all, becauſe they never knew a ſound Converſion, which ſhould have rooted off their Hearts this worldly intereſt, and delivered them up entirely, and abſolutely to Chriſt. Hence alſo it is, that we have ſo few Profeſſors that can lay by their Pride, and bear diſeſteem or injury, and love their enemies, and bleſs them that curſe them, yea, or love their godly Friends that croſs them, or diſhonour them. And ſo few that can deny themſelves in their honour, or any conſiderable thing, for the ſake of Chriſt, and in obedience, and conformity to his will. And all becauſe they never had that ſaving change, that takes down Self, and

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sets up Christ as Soveraign in the soul. And hence also it is, that we have in this Age so many dreadful instances of Apostasie: So many reproaching the Scripture, that once they thought had Converted them, and the way of Holiness, that once they did profess; and denying the Lord himself that bought them; and all because they formerly took up with a superficial counterfeit Conversion. O how commonly, and how lamentably doth this misery appear among Professors in their unsavoury discourse, their strife and envy, on Religious pretences, their dead formality, their passionate divisions, or their selfish, proud, and earthly minds! A through Conversion would have cured all this, at least as to the dominion of it.

Having therefore in my Call to the unconverted, endeavour'd to awaken careless Souls, and perswade the obstinate to Turn and Live, I have here spoken to them that seem to be about the work, and given them some *Directions* and *Perswasions* to prevent their perishing in the birth, and so to prevent that Hypocrisie which else they are like to be formed into, and

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the deceit of their hearts, the Errour of their Lives, and the Misery at their death, which is like to follow. That they live not as those that *flatter God with their mouth, and lie unto him with their tongues, because their heart was not right with him, neither are they stedfast in his Covenant*, Psa. 78.36,37. *Lest denying deep entertainment, and rooting to the seed of Life, or choaking it by the radicated predominant Love and cares of the world, they wither when the heat of persecution shall break forth*, Mat. 13.20,21,21,22. *And lest building on the sands, they fall when the winds and storms arise, and their fall be great*, Mat. 7.26,27. *And so they go out from us, that they may be made manifest that they were not of us: For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us*, 1 John. 2,19. Look therefore to this great important business, *and give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. 1.10. And trust not your hearts too easily, or too confidently. *But turn to the Lord with all your hearts* (Joel 2. 12.) *Cleave to him Resolvedly, or with purpose of heart*, (Acts 11.23.) *And see that you*

sell

ſell all and buy the Pearl (Matth. 13.46.) *And ſtick not at the price but abſolutely reſign your ſelves to Chriſt and to turn to him, as* Zacheus *and other Primitive Converts did, ſurrendring all that you have unto his Will,* (Luke 19.8,9.) *Leave not any root of bitterneſs behind; Make no exceptions, or reſolves, but deny your ſelves; Forſake all and follow him that hath led you this ſelf-denying way; and truſt to his Blood, and Merits, and Promiſe, for a Treaſure in Heaven, and then you are his Diſciples, and true Chriſtians indeed,* Luke 14.33. Luke 18.24,25. Reader, if thou heartily make this Covenant and keep it, thou ſhalt find that Chriſt will not deceive thee, when the world deceiveth them that choſe it, in their greateſt extremity. But if thou draw back, and think theſe terms too hard, remember that Everlaſting Life was offered thee, and remember why and for what thou didſt reject it, *And if in this life time thou wilt have thy good things, expect to be tormented, when the believing ſelf-denying Souls are comforted,* Luke 16. 25.

May 29. 1658. R. B.

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Directions

Directions to Sinners that are purposed to Turn, and are under the Work of Conversion, that it miscarry not.

THe first and greatest matter in the seeking after the salvation of our souls, is to be sure that we lay the *foundation* well, and that the work of *Conversion* be throughly wrought. To this end I have already used many *perswasions* with the unconverted to return, as thinking all further *Directions* vain, till we have *perswaded* men to a *consent* and *willingness* to practice them. And in the end of that Discourse, I added a few Directions for the use of such as are willing to be converted. But because I know that this is a matter of exceeding consequence, I dare not thus leave it, before I have added some *further Directions*, to prevent the *miscarrying* of this work where it is *begun*. And least I should lose my labour, through the unpreparedness of the Reader; I shall first give you some preparing Considerations, which may awaken you to the practice of the *Directions* which I shall give you.

Consider first, That *half-Conversions are the undoing of many thousand souls*. If you are but like *Agrippa*, Act. 26. 28. *almost perswaded to be Christians*, you will be but *almost* saved. Many a thousand that are now past help, have had the Word come near them, and cast them into a fear, and make some stir and trouble in their souls, awakening their consciences, and forcing them to some good *purposes* and *Promises*; yea, and bringing them to the *performances* of a *half* reformation; But this is not it that will serve your turn. Many have been so much changed, as not to be *far*

from the Kingdom of God, that yet came short of it, *Mark* 12. 34. There is no promise in Scripture that you shall be pardoned if you *almost repent* and believe, or be saved, if you be *almost sanctified* and obedient: But on the contrary the Lord hath plainly resolved, that you must *turn or die*, though you *almost* turn: and repent, or perish, though you *almost* repent: and that you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, without conversion and a new birth, though you come never so near it. God hath resolved upon the terms of your salvation; and it is in vain to hope for salvation upon upon any other terms. God will not change nor come down to your terms; It is you that must change and come quite over to his terms, or you are lost for ever. If you come never so near them, you are but lost men if you come not *up to* them. The Lord well knew what he did, when he made his Covenant and Law and he imposed nothing on the sons of men but what his infinite wisdom told him it was fit for him to impose; and he will not now *compound* with sinners, and take less then he requireth; that is, less then the preheminency in their hearts; nor will he ever come down to any lower terms with you, then those which he propounded to you in his Gospel. And therefore poor sinners, as you love your souls, do not stand dodging and halving with God; but give up your selves entirely to him: and do not stop at the beginnings of a conversion, but go through with it, till you are become new creatures indeed, or you are undone when you have done all. A half unsound Convert will as certainly perish as a Drunkard or a Whoremonger; though his torment may not be so great.

2. Consider also, That *if you do not go through with the work when you are upon it, you may perhaps make it more difficult then it was before ever you medled with it*, and make it a very doubtful case whether ever it will be done. As it is with a wound or other sore: if you tamper

tamper with it with salves that are not agreeable to it, or are disorderly applied: or if you skin it over before it be searched to the bottom, it must be opened again, and will cost you double pain before it be cured. Or as I have seen it with some that have had a bone broken, or out of joynt, and it hath been set amiss at first: O what torments were the poor creatures fain to undergo, in having it broken or stretcht and set again! which might have been spared, if it had been throughly done at first. So if you will be shrinking, and drawing back, and favouring your flesh, and will not go to the quick, you will make your Conversion much more difficult: you must be brought to it again, and fetch your groans yet deeper then before: and weep over all your former tears; your doubts will be multiplyed; your fears and sorrows will be encreased: and all will go sorer with you then at first. O what a case will you be in, when your sores must be lanced a *second* time, and your bones as it were broken again! Then you will wish you had gone through with it at the first.

Yea, perhaps you may put God to it to fetch you in by some sharp affliction, and send out so boistrous and churlish a Messenger to call you home, as may make you wish you had hearkened to a more gentle call: When the Sheep will straggle, the Dog must be sent to affright them home. Many a foolish sinner makes light of the gentle invitations of grace, and they stand hovering between their sins and Christ; and sometimes they have a mind to turn, and the next temptation they are off again, and then they come on again coldly and with half a heart: and thus they stand trifling with the God of Heaven, till he is fain to take another course with them, and resolve to use some sharper means: And when he layeth them under his rod, and they can neither fly from him, nor resist him, but see that their lives and souls are at his mercy, then they begin to look about them, and see their folly, and change their minds. You can tarry, and delay,

daily with the dreadful God, in the time of your prosperity. And we may ask you over and over, whether you will turn, before we can have a hearty answer: But what will you do when God shall begin to frown, and when he takes you in hand by his unresistible power, and lets loose upon you the terrours of his wrath? Will you then make as light of his mercy as you do now? Have you not read *Dan.* 5. 6. how small an apparition of his anger did make a carouzing King look pale, and his joynts to tremble in the midst of his jovialty? A *Manasseth* will bethink himself and come in when he is laid in Irons, though he could set light by God before, 2. *Chron.* 33. 13. If *Jonah* will run away from God, he can send a boisterous Messenger to arrest him, and cast him as it were into the belly of Hell, and make him cry for mercy to him that he disobeyed. So, if you will stand trifling with God, and will not by fair means be perswaded to yield and come away, you may shortly look to hear from him in another manner: for he hath a voice that will make the proudest face look pale, and the stubbornest heart that is to tremble. If an idle stubborn Child will not learn nor be ruled, the Master or Parent will teach him with the rod, and give him a lash, and ask him, *Will you yet learn?* and ask him again, *What say you now, will you yet obey?* So will God do by you, if he love you, and mean to save you: when he hath taken away your wealth, your friends, your children, will you *then* hearken to him, or will you not? When you lie groaning on your couch, and all your parts are overwhelmed with pains, and death begins to lay hands upon you, and bids you *now come and answer for your rebellions and delays before the living God*. What will you do *then*? Will *you* turn or not? O the lamentable folly of sinners, that put themselves to so much sorrow, and great calamity for themselves! When sickness comes, and death draws near, you beg, and cry, and groan, and promise: When you feel the rod, what Christians will

will you then be? And why not without so much ado? You then think God deals somewhat hardly with you: And why will you not turn then by gentler means? You might spare your selves much of this misery if you *would*; and you *will* not. Is it a seemly thing for a man to be *driven* to Heaven by scourges? Is God so bad a Master, and Heaven so bad a place, that you will not turn to them, and mind them, and seek them, till their be no remedy, and you are as it were driven to it against your will? Is the world such an inheritance, and sin so good a thing, and the flesh or devil so good a Master, that you will not leave them till you are whipt away? What a fruitless unreasonable course is this?

Well Sirs, the case is plain before you. Turn you must at one time or other, or be the firebrands of Hell. And seeing it is a thing that must be done, were it not best for you to take the easiest and the surest way to do it; even to strike while the Iron is hot, before it cool again; and to go through with it when God doth move you and perswade you; if you love your flesh it self, do not put him to take up the rod, and fetch you home by stripes and terrours.

But that is not the worst: for it will sorely hazard the work it self, and consequently your salvation, if you do not go through with it at the first attempt. I know there is many an one that hath been converted and saved, after many purposes, and promises, and half-conversions. But yet I must tell you, that this is a very dangerous course. For you do not know when you grieve the Spirit of grace, and set so light by mercy when it is offered you, whether that Spirit may not utterly forsake you and leave you to your own ungodly wills, and let you take your lust and pleasures, and say. [*Let this wretch be filthy still: let him keep his drunkenness, his companions, his worldliness, and the curse of God with them, till he have tried what it is that they will*

do for him: Let him follow his own conceits, and the pride and obstinacy of his own heart, till he find whether they will bring him: Let him serve the flesh and the world, till he understand whether God or they be the better master. Seeing he will not be wise on earth, let him learn in hell, and let torments teach him, seeing mercy might not teach him.] O poor soul! what a safe art thou in, if this should once be the resolution of God?

Moreover you may easily know, that the longer you stay, the more leasure you give the devil to assault you, and to try one way when he cannot prevail by another, and to strengthen his temptations: Like a foolish Souldier, that will stand still to be shot at, rather then assault the enemy.

And the longer you delay, the more your sin gets strength and rooting. If you cannot bend a twig, how will you be able to bend it when it is a Tree? If you cannot pluck up a tender plant, are you likely to pluck up a sturdy Oak? Custom gives strength and root to vices. *A Blackamoor may as well change his skin, or a Leopard his spots, as those that are accustomed to do evil, can learn to do well*, Jer. 13. 23.

If you stick at Conversion as a difficult matter to day, it will be more difficult to morrow, or the next month, and the next year, then it is now.

Yea the very resistance of the Spirit doth harden the heart, and the delayes and triflings of the soul do bring it to an insensibility and boldness in sin, and drive away the fear of God from the heart. *Now* it may be you are somewhat awakened, and begin to see that you must turn or die: but if you trifle and delay, this light may be gone, and leave you in greater darkness then before: and the voice that now awakeneth you, may be silent, and leave you to fall asleep again.

Moreover, you know that you are uncertain of the continuance of the Gospel. You know not whether you shall have such lively serious Preachers as you have

now

now. Nor you know not whether you shall have such Godly Neighbours and Company to encourage you, and help you in the Work. God will remove them one after another to himself, and then you will have the fewer Prayers for you, and fewer Warnings, and good Examples, and perhaps be left wholly to the Company of deceived ungodly Fools, that will do nothing but hinder and discourage you from Conversion. And you are not sure that Religion will continue in that Reputation as now it is in. The *Times* may turn, before *you* turn; and Godliness may become a Scorn again, and it may be a matter of suffering, and may cost you your Lives to live as the Servants of Christ must do. And therefore, if you stop at it now as a difficult thing, when you have all the Helps and Encouragements that you can expect, and the Way to Heaven is made so fair; and when Magistrates, and Ministers, and Neighbours, are ready to encourage and help you; what will you do in Times of Persecutions and Discouragement? If you cannot turn when you have all these Helps and Means, what will you do when they are taken from you? If you cannot *row* with *the stream*, how will *you row against it*? If *you* dare not set to Sea when you have Wind and Tide, and Sun-shine; what will you do in Storms and Tempests, when all is against you! O what would some of your Fore-fathers have given, to have seen the Days that you see! How glad would many a thousand in other Countries of the World be, to have but the Helps to Heaven that you have? Never look to have the Way fairer and easier while you live. If you think Heaven is offered you at too dear a rate now, *you* may even let it go, and try whether Hell be better, for the next Offer is like to be upon harder Terms rather than easier. If you cannot now find in your Hearts to turn and live an Holy Life, what would you have done in the Days of the Apostles, or ancient Christians? And what would you have done in *Spain* or *Italy*, where it would cost you your Lives? He

that will not be Converted *now*, but thinks the Terms of Grace too hard, is so impious a Despiser of Christ and Heaven, that it is no wonder if God resolve, that he shall never taste of the Salvation that was offered him, *Luke* 14. 24.

Moreover, you know upon what Uncertainties you hold your Lives, you have no assurance of them for an hour; but you are sure that they are passing away while you delay. And will you trifle then in a Work that must be done? What a Case are you in, if Death find you unconverted? The Heart of Man is not able now to conceive the Misery of your Case. How dare *you venture to* live another *day* in an unconverted State, lest Death should find you so? Are you not afraid when you lie down at Night, and afraid when you go out of your Doors in the Morning, lest Death surprize you are converted? If you be not, its long of your deadness and presumption.

And I would fain hear what it is that should thus stop you. What are you afraid of? Is God an Enemy, that you are loth to come to him? Is the Devil a Friend that you are so loth to leave him? Is Sin a Paradise? Is Holiness a Misery? Is it pleasanter Life to love your Money, or your Lands, or your Meat and Drink, and Lusts, than to love the most blessed God, the Creator of the World, the Life of our Souls, and our Eternal Felicity? Is it better to pamper a Carcass that must shortly stink as the Dung, than to provide for a living immortal Soul? Whether do you think, that Earth or Heaven will be the more glorious and durable Felicity?

What is it, Sirs, that you stick at, that you make so many Delays before you'll turn? Is there any difficulty in the Point? Do you think it an hard Question, whether you should turn or not? Why, how can you be so blind? Do you stand pausing upon the Business, as if it were a Doubt, whether God or the World were better? And whether Sin or Holiness, Christ or Death, Heaven or Hell, were to be preferred? I pray

you

you consider: Can you reasonably think, that Conversion will do you any hurt? Can it bring you into a worse Condition than you are in? Sure you cannot fear such a thing: You are in your Blood; you are dead in Sin; you are Children of Wrath, while you are unconverted: You are under the Curse of the Law of God; you are the Slaves of the Devil; you are the Heirs of Hell, and under the Guilt of all your Sins; your Life is a continued Rebellion against God; you are employed every Day in the destroying of your Selves, in kindling the Flames that must everlastingly torment you, and laying in Fewel for the perpetuating of your Misery; and fighting against your Friends that would deliver you, and unthankfully abusing Christ and Grace, and Ministers, and Friends that would save your Souls. This is the Condition that every one of you is in, till you are converted. And can you fear lest Conversion would bring you into a worse Condition than this? Sirs, these Truths are sure and plain: And if yet you stick at it, your Error is so palpably gross, that unless you are Mad-men, I may be bold to say, it is a wilful Error. And if you love to be deceived, and wilfully choose a Lie, you must take that you get by it.

3. Consider further, That *Half-Conversions do often prove an occasion of deluding Mens Souls, and making them quiet in a miserable State, and so of keeping them from being converted to the last.* If you had never done any thing in it, you would more easily be perswaded that your Case is bad, and that there is still a necessity of your change. But when you have had some Convictions and Troubles of Mind, and Fears and Sorrows, and so have fallen into an outside partial Reformation, and now are perswaded that you are truly converted, when it is no such matter; What a dangerous Impediment to your Conversion may this prove? And all because you flubber over the Work, and cut it off before it reacheth to Sincerity, and strive against the Workings of the Spirit, and break away from your Physi-

than before he hath done the Cure, and would not follow it unto the end I know that a Half-Conversion, if it be *known* to be no more, is much better than none, and doth often prepare Men for a Saving Work. But when this Half-Conversion is taken to be a true and saving Change, as too commonly it is, it proves one of the greatest Impediments of Salvation. When ever Christ shall afterwards knock at your Door, you will not know him, as thinking that he dwells with you already. If you read any Books that call on you to be converted, or hear any Preachers that call on you to turn, you have this at hand to cozen your selves with, and frustrate all: You'll think, *This is not spoken to me; for I am converted already.* O how quietly do such poor deluded Sinners daily read and hear their own Doom and Misery; and never once dream that they are the Men that are meant, and therefore are never dismayed at the matter! This formeth you into a State of Hypocrisie, and makes the Course of your Duties, and your Lives to be hypocritical. If another Man that knows himself to be still unconverted, do but read the Threatnings of the Word against such, or hear of the Terrors of the Lord from a Minister, he may be brought to confess that this is his own Case, and so to perceive the Misery of his Condition. But when such as you do read and hear these things, they never trouble you, for you think that they do not touch you: You are Scripture-proof, and Sermon-proof; and all by the delusion of your *Half*-Conversion. O how zealously will such a man cry out against the Sins of others! and tell them of their Misery, and perswade them to turn, and shew them the Danger that is near them, if they do not; and in the mean time little thinks that this is his own Case, and that he speaks all this against his own Soul. How will such Men applaud a Sermon that drives at the Conversion of a Sinner, and that tells them their Misery while they are unconverted? O thinks he, this touched such and such; I am glad that such a Man and

such

such a Man would it: And he little thinks, that it is nearly touched himself. How smoothly will he go on in any Discourse against wicked unregenerate Men, as *David* heard the Parable of *Nathan*, and it never once entreth into their Thoughts, that they speak all this against themselves; till the Judge shall tell them when it is too late, *Thou art the Man.* It will turn not only the Stream of your Thoughts into Hypocrisie and Self-deceit, but also the Stream of your Speeches to others; yea, and the Current of your Prayers, and all the rest of your Religious Performances. When in Confession you should acknowledge and lament an unregenerate carnal State, you will only confess that you have the Infirmities of the Saints, and that you have this or that Sin, which yet you think is mortified. When you should importunately beg for *Renewing* Grace, you will beg only for *Strengthening* Grace, or *Assurance*: When you should be labouring to break your Hearts, you will be studying to heal them; and will be hearkning after present Comforts, when you have more need of Godly Sorrow. It will fill your Mouths in Prayer with Pharisaical Thanksgivings for the Mercies of Regeneration, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, which you never received. Little doth many a Soul know what Sanctification, and the several Graces of the Spirit are, that use to give *God* thanks for them; there's *many* a *many* a one, that must for *ever be in Hell*, that were very in their Prayers to *give God thanks* for their *hopes of* g. And the common Cause of all this Deceit and Mis is, that Men do run from under the Hands of the Physician, before he ever went to the bottom of the Sore, and go away with a Half Conversion, and spend all the rest of their Lives in a meer Delusion, verily thinking they are converted, when they are not. How confidently will such receive the Lord's Supper, and thrust themselves into the Communion of the Saints, as if they had as good right as others to be there? Till the Lord of the Feast shall take them

to task, and say, *Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a Wedding-Garment?* And then they will be *speechless*, Mat. 22. 12. How many false deceiving Comforts, and perhaps even seeming Raptures and Assurance, may these have in themselves, as verily thinking their Case is good, when alas, they never yet laid the Foundation? Yea, and it is to be observed, that Satan is a Friend to the Comforts of this kind of Men, and therefore will do all that he can to promote them. For he would willingly keep his Garrison in peace, *Luke* 11.21. And therefore he may possibly be a comforting Spirit to them himself, and imitate the Holy Ghost the Comforter of the Saints: And it may be give them such Raptures as seem higher than those which the Spirit of Holiness doth give. He envieth the Saints their Peace and Comfort, because he foresees how durable they will prove: But he can be content that deluded Hypocrites may have Joy, because *their* Comforts do not weaken, but strengthen his Kingdom within them, and he knows they are like to endure but for a while.

And thus you may perceive, how hard it is to convert one of these Half-converted Men, that have strangled the New Creature as it were in the Birth, and that are fortified against all the Means of Grace, by a false Conceit that they are sanctified already. See therefore that you make sure Work, and take not up in the middle, and with halves, but take your present time, and give up your Souls to a total change.

3. Consider; If you *up take short of a thorough* Conversion, *you lose all your Labour, and Sufferings, and Hopes, as to the Matter of your Salvation.*

And what pity is it that so much should be lost? Alas, to see many of our hearers toucht at a Sermon, and come to a Minister and bewail their sin, and seem to be humble, and promise to be new men, and yet all this to be lost; How sad a case is this to think of? To see them leave their company and former course of life, and come among the professors of holiness,

and

and all Men take them for real Converts; and yet all this to be lost, and their souls lost after all: How sad a case is this? If you grow up to the greatest parts for outward duty, and be able to discourse or pray, or preach, even to the admiration of the hearer; yet if you do not ground this on a through-Conversion, all is but lost, as to your own salvation. If you keep up the highest strain of profession, and get the highest esteem in the Church, so that others depend upon you as Oracles; yea, if the Pope with all his infallibility should Canonize you for Saints; it were all but loss. If you should keep up the most confident perswasions of your salvation, and hope to go to Heaven, to the last hour of your lives; it were all but lost if you build not all on a through-Conversion. Yea, If you should be taken by persecutors for one of the party to which you joyn, and should suffer for the cause of Religion among them; all were but lost, without a sound Conversion, 1. *Cor.* 13. 1, 2, 3.

It is a pitiful case to see some poor unsanctified souls, how they wander and change from one opinion to another, and from party to party, to find out that which they want within. They turn to this party first, and that party next, and then to another, and then think they are *sure* in the way to Heaven: when they never throughly turned to God by Jesus Christ; and therefore are certainly out of the way, whatever party it be that they joyn with. Some go to the giddy Sects that make the highest pretences to strictness: And some go to *Rome*, because they think that there they shall have more company, and hear the deluding sound of *Unity*, *Universality*, *Antiquity*, *Succession*, *Miracles*, and such like: And then they think they have hit the way. Alas poor souls! If God were but nearest and dearest to your hearts, and Christ and his righteousness exalted within you, and your souls unfeignedly turned from your sins, you would be in the certain way to Heaven, in what Country or company, or Church soever you were:

sup-

supposing that you believe and do nothing there; which is inconsistent with this life of Grace. (Though yet every Christian should choose that particular Society, if he can, where he may not only be saved, but most certainly saved, and find the greatest helps and least hindrances, or else where he may do God the greatest service.) But choose what company you will in all the world, the strictest, the most reformed, the most splendid in outward pomp and glory, or of whatsoever excellency else you can imagine, you will never be saved in it your selves, as long as your hearts are unconverted. I know the Papists have found out many devices, by Sacraments, and Ceremonies, and the Merits of the Saints, to patch up the defect of a through Conversion; but all are meer delusions that pretend to such a thing.

O then think of this poor sinner: hast thou gone so far, and done so much, and shall all be lost because thou wilt not follow it to the end? Hast thou groaned, and wept, and confessed and bemoaned thine own condition? Hast thou prayed, and read, and heard, and fasted, and changed thy company, and much of thy course of life? and shall all this be lost, for want of going to the bottom, and making a through work of it? What a loss will this be?

5. Consider also, *What an admirable help and advantage it will be to you, through the whole course of your lives, if the work of Conversion be once throughly wrought.* I will shew you this in some Particulars.

First, it will be an excellent help to your *understandings*, against the grosser Errors of the world, and will stablish you in the truth much more then meer Arguments can do: for you will be able to speak for the truth from feeling and experience: he that hath the Law written both in his Bible and in his heart, is likely to hold it faster then he that hath it in his Bible alone. But of this I have spoken already in my Treatise against Infidelity, *Part* 2.

Secondly, if you be but throughly Converted, you will

will a continual help against temptations: you have not only experience of the mischief of sinning, and the folly of those Reasons that are brought for its defence: but you have also a *new nature* which is against the temptation, as life is against poison; and as it is a great disadvantage to the Law of Christ, that it speaks against the *nature* of the ungodly; so is it a disadvantage to the temptations of the Devil, that they would draw a Christian against his *new nature*. You have that *within* you that will Plead more effectually against sensuality, uncharitableness, pride, or worldliness, or any the like sin, then reason or learning alone can do. (As in the forecited Book I have further manifested.)

Thirdly, if Conversion be throughly wrought, you will have within you a continual helper of your graces, and a remembrancer to put you in mind of duty, and a spur to put you on to the performance, and a furtherer of your souls in the performance it selfsit is out of this spark and principal within you that the Holy Ghost doth raise the acts of grace. This is it that the Word, and Prayer, and Conference, and Sacraments, and all the means of grace must work upon. If we see you do amiss, we have hopes that you will hear us; if we plainly reprove you, we may look you should take it in good part: For you have that within you that saith as we say, and is at deadly enmity with the sin which we prove. If we provoke you to Love and to good Works, we dare almost promise our selves that you will obey: for you have that within you that dispoeth you to the duty, and preacheth our Sermons to you over again. O what an advantage it is to our teaching, when you are *all taught of God within*, as well as by his Messengers *without!* But when we speak to the *unconverted*, we have little to work upon: We give Physick to the dead, we speak all against the bent of their souls; and every reproof and exortation to holiness goes against their very *natures*; and therefore what wonder if we have the smaller hopes to prevail?

Fourthly,

Fourthly, if the work be throughly done at first, it will help to *resolve many doubts* that may be afterwards cast into your minds. You need not be still at a loss and looking behind you, and questioning your foundation, but may go cheerfully and boldly on. O what an excellent encouragement is this; to know that you have hitherto made good your ground, and left all safe and sure behind you, and have nothing to do but to look before you, and press on towards the mark, till you lay hold upon the prize: whereas if you be in any great doubt of your Conversion, it will be stopping you and discouraging you in all your work: you will be still looking behind you and saying, *What if I should yet be unconverted?* When you should cheerfully address your selves to Prayer or Sacraments, how sadly will you go, as being utterly uncertain whether you have a saving right to them, or whether God will accept a Sacrifice at your hand? When you should grow and go forward, you will have little heart to it, because you know not whether you are yet in the way; and this will damp your life and comfort in every duty when you must say [*I know not whether yet I be throughly Converted.*] O therefore stop not the work at first.

Fifthly and lastly, if the work be throughly done at first, you will persevere, when others fall away. You will have rooting in your selves, entertaining the seed as into depth of earth; and you will have the Holy Ghost within you, and (more then so) engaged for your preservation, and the perfecting of your salvation: when they that received the Word as seed upon a Rock, and never give it deep entertainment, will wither and fall away, in the time of tryal; and from them that have not saving grace, shall be taken away, even that which they seemed to have, *Mat.* 13. 12. & 25. 19.

6. And Lastly Consider, *If you fall short of a true Conversion at the first, the Devil will take occasion by it to tempt you at last to utter despair.* When you have made

made many Essays and Trials, and been about the Work again and again, he will perswade you that there is no possibility of accomplishing it. If we convince an open profane Person that is unconverted, he may easier see that yet there is hopes of it: But if a Man have been *Half-converted*, and lived long in a formal self-deceiving Profession of Religion, and been taken by himself and others for a Godly Man, as it is very hard to convince this Man that he is unconverted, so when he is convinced of it, he will easily fall into desparation. For Satan will tell him, [*If thou be yet unconverted after so many Confessions and Prayers, and after so long a Course of Religion, what hope canst thou have that yet it should be done! Thou wilt never have better Opportunities then thou hast had. If such Sermons as thou hast heard could not do it, what hope is there of it? If such Books, and such Company, and such Mercies, and such Afflictions have not done it, what hope canst thou have? Canst thou hear any livelier Teaching than thou hast heard? Or speak any holier Words than thou hast spoken? If yet the Work be quite undone, it is not forsaking another Sin, nor going a Step further that will do it: And therefore never think of it; for there is no hope: Dost thou not know how oft thou hast tried in vain? And what canst thou do more?*] And thus you give advantage to the Tempter by your first *Delays*, and taking up in meer Preparatories. And therefore I beseech you, as you love your Souls, take heed of resisting the Spirit of Grace, and breaking off the Work before it is thoroughly done; but go to the bottom, and follow it on, 'till it be accomplished in Sincerity. And now hoping, that upon these Considerations you are resolved to do your best, I shall come to the thing which I principally intended; which is to give you certain Directions, which if you will obey, you may be Converts and Saints indeed.

Direction I. Lest the Work of Conversion should miscarry where it seemeth to be begun, or in a hopeful way, I first advise you, to [*Labour after a right Understanding of the true Nature of Christianity, and the Meaning of the Gospel which is sent for to convert you.*] You are naturally Slaves to the Prince of Darkness; and live in a State of Darkness, and do the Works of Darkness, and are hasting apace to utter Darkness. And it is the Light of Saving Knowledge that must recover you, or there is no Recovery. God is the *Father of Light*, and *dwelleth in Light*; Christ is the *Light of the World*; his Ministers are also the *Lights of the World*, as under him; and are sent to *turn Men from Darkness to Light, by the Gospel, which is the Light to our Feet:* And this is to make us *Children of Light, that we may no more do the Works of Darkness, but may be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. 1 John 1. 5. 1 John 1. 5, 9. James 1. 17. Mat. 5. 14. Acts 26. 18. John 8. 12. 2 Pet. 1. 19. Eph. 5. 8, 13. Col. 1 12. Believe it, Darkness is not the way to the Celestial Glory. Ignorance is your Disease, and Knowledge must be your Cure. I know the Ignorant have many Excuses, and are apt to think that the Case is not so bad with them as we make it to be; and that there is no such need of Knowledge, but a Man may be saved without it. But this is because they want that Knowledge that should shew them the Misery of their Ignorance, and the Worth of Knowledge. Hath not the Scripture plainly told you, That *if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose Minds the God of this World hath blinded, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them?* 2 Cor. 3. 4. I know that many that have much Knowledge are ungodly. But what of that? Can any Man therefore be godly, or be saved, *without* Knowledge? You may have a bad Servant that yet is skilful enough in his Work: But yet you will not mend the matter,

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by taking one that hath no Skill at all. You may send a Man on your Errand that knows the way, and yet will not go it, but loiter and deceive you: But what of that? Will you therefore think to mend the matter, by sending one that knoweth not a Step of the Way, nor will not learn it? Tho' a Man of Knowledge may be the Servant of the Devil, yet no Man *without* Knowledge (that hath the use of his Reason) can be the Servant of God. A Man may go to Hell with Knowledge; but he *certainly shall* go to Hell without it. I do not say that you must all be Men of Learning, and skill'd in the Arts and Sciences, and Languages: But you must have the Knowledge of a *Christian*, tho' not of a *Scholar*. Can you love or serve a God that you *know* not? Can you let go Friends, and Goods, and Life, for a Glory which you have no Knowledge of? Can you make it the principal Business of your Lives, to seek for a Heaven whose Excellencies you know not of? Can you lament your Sin and Misery, when you are unacquainted with it? Or will you strive against Sin as the greatest Evil, when you know not the Evil of it? Will you believe in a Christ whom you do not know, and trust your Souls and all upon him? Will you rest upon a Promise, or fear a Threatning, or be ruled by a Law, which you do not understand? It is not possible to be Christians, without knowing the Substance of Christianity: Nor is it possible for you to be saved, without knowing the way of Salvation.

Labour therefore to be well acquainted with the Grounds and Reasons, and Nature of your Religion. The clearer your Light is, the warmer and livelier your Hearts will be. Illumination is the first part of Sanctification. The Head is the passage to the Heart. O if you did but throughly know what Sin is, and what a Life it is to serve the Flesh, and what the end of this will prove, with what detestation would you cast it away? If you did throughly know what a Life of Holiness is, how speedily would you choose it? If

you

you did truly know what God is, how infinitely powerful, and wise, and good; how holy, and just, and true, and what Title he hath to you, and Authority over you, and what an Eternal Portion he would be to you, how is it possible that you could prefer the Dirt of the World before him, or delay any longer to return unto him? If you did but truly know, what Christ is, and what he hath done and suffered for you, and what that Pardon, and Grace, and Glory are which he hath purchased for you, and offereth to you, and how sure his Promise is by which it is offered; it is not possible that you should refuse to entertain him, or delay to give up your Souls unto him. Do you think a Man that truly knows what Heaven is, and what Hell is, can still be in doubt whether he should turn or not? Alas, Sirs, if God would but open your Eyes, to see where you are, and what you are doing, you would run as for your Lives; and quickly change your Minds and Ways. You would no more stay in your Carnal State, than you would stay in a House that were falling down on your Heads, or in a Ship that you perceive sinking under you, or on the Sands when you see the Tide coming towards you. If you did but see your Chamber full of Devils this Night, you would not stand to ask whether you should be gone: And sure then, if you knew how the Devils are about you, how they deceive you, and rule *you*, and wait to drag *you* away to Hell, *you* would never stay a Night longer *willingly* in such a State. While Men understand not what the Gospel means, nor what a Minister saith to them, no wonder if they regard them not, but continue in their Sin. If you see a Bear, or a mad Dog, making towards a Man, and tell him of it, and call him to be gone, if he be a Man of another Language, and do not understand you, he will make never the more haste: But if he understand and believe you, he will away. If People think that Ministers are in jest with them, or that they are uncertain of what they say, no marvel if they hear us in jest, or

as Men that believe not what they hear: But if you knew that your Lives lay on it, yea your everlasting Life, would you not regard it, and look about you? Now you stand deliberating and questioning the Business whether you should turn, and let go Sin, or no: But if you knew that you must certainly have Hell with it if you keep it, methinks your doubt should quickly be resolved, and you should be loth to give another Nights Lodging to so chargeable and dangerous a Guest. Now when we perswade you to Holiness of Life, you will demur on it, as if there were some doubtfulness in the matter: But if you knew the Nature and End of Holiness, you would soon be out of doubt; and if you knew but how much happier you might be with God, you would never stick at the parting with your most delightful Sins. As the Jews rejected Christ, and preferred a Murderer before him, and cried out, *Crucifie him*, and all because they did not *know* him, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. *Joh.* 8. 9. & 1. 10. *Act.* 13. 17. So *you* let *Christ* knock and call, and offer *you* Salvation, and *you* stand *questioning* whether *you should not obey his Call*, and *whether you should not prefer your Lusts before him*; and all because you *know* him not, nor the Grace and Glory which he tendereth to you. When Men understand not the Reasons of God, that should prevail with them, no wonder if they part not with that which is as dear to them as their Lives. But when once they know the *Reasons* of Christianity, those moving, weighty, undeniable Reasons, that are fetch'd from God, and Heaven, and Hell, they'll then stand questioning the matter no longer; but they will resign up all, even Life it self. All this I speak of a spiritual, powerful, and a practical Knowledge, and not of every swimming Opinion and Conceit.

Study therefore what God is, and what he is to you, and what he would be to you. Study what Sin is, and what the Damnation is which it deserveth. Study what Christ is, and hath done and suffered for you, and what he is willing to do if you neglect him not.

Study

Study what the World is, and what is the utmost that Sin will do for you. Study what the everlasting Glory is, which you may have with God, if you lose it not by your Folly. And study what Faith is, and what Repentance is, and what Love, and Joy, and a holy and heavenly Life, and how little Reason you have to be afraid of them. If this *Understanding* have but deeply possessed you, it will byass your Hearts, and make you resolved setled Converts.

Whereas if you seem to turn, and scarce know why, and seem to take up a Christian Life, before you are throughly possessed with the Nature, Grounds, and Reasons of it, no marvel if you are quickly lost again in the dark, and if every Caviller that you meet with can *non-plus* you, and make you stagger, and call in question all that you have done, and ravel all your Work: Or if you do but run from one Party to another, and follow every one that tells you a fair Tale, and never know what to fix upon, nor when you are in the way, and when you are out.

The Apprehensions of the Mind do move the whole Man: *Wisdom* is the *Guide* and *Stay* of the *Soul*. Sinning is *doing foolishly*, 2 Sam. 24. 10. And Sinners *are Fools*, Prov. 1. 22. Psal. 75. 4. Their Mirth is but *the Mirth of Fools*, and their Song *the Song of Fools*, Eccl. 7. 4, 5. Yea, the best of their Services, while they refuse to hear and obey, is but the *Sacrifice of Fools*, Eccl. 5. 1. And such are not fit for the House of God: *For God hath no pleasure in Fools*, Eccl. 5. 4. He hath need to have his Wits about him and know what he doth, that will be the Servant of the God of Heaven, and will escape the Deceits of a subtile Devil, and get to Heaven through so many Difficulties as are before him. *Above all getting* therefore *get Wisdom.*

Direct. II. If you would not have the Work of your Conversion miscarry, when you *understand* what is offered you, then *search the Scriptures daily to see whether those things be so or not.* So

So did the *Bereans*, Acts 17. 11. and the Text saith, That *therefore they believed*. We come not to cheat and deceive you; and therefore we desire not that you should take any thing from us, but what we can prove *to you* from the Word of God to be certainly true. We desire not to *lead* you *in* the *dark*, but by the *light* to *lead* you *out* of *darkness*: And therefore we refuse not to submit *all* our Doctrine to an equal Trial. Tho' we would not have you wrong your Souls by an unjust distrust of us; yet would we not desire you to take these great and weighty Things meerly upon our Words: For then your Faith will be in Man; and then no marvel if it be weak, and uneffectual, and quickly shaken: If you trust a Man to Day, you may distrust him to Morrow; and if one Man be of greatest Credit with you this Year, perhaps another of a contrary Mind may be of more Credit with you the next Year. And therefore we desire no further to be believed by you, than is necessary to lead you up to God, and to help you to understand that Word which you must believe: Our desire therefore is, that you search the Scripture, and try whether the things which we tell you be the truth. The Word will never work on you to purpose, 'till you hear and see God in it, and perceive that it's he and not Man only that speaks to *you*. When *you* hear none speaking to *you* but the Minister, no marvel if *you* dare despise him; for he is a frail and silly Man like *your selves*; when *you* think that the Doctrine which we preach to *you* is meerly of our own devising, and the Conjecture of our own Brain, no marvel if *you* set light by it, and will not let go all that *you* have, at the perswasion of a Preacher. But when *you* have search'd the Scripture, and find that it is the Word of the God of Heaven, dare *you* despise it then? When *you* there find that we said no more then we were commanded, and God that hath spoken this Word will stand to it; then sure it will go nearer *you*, and *you* will consider of it, and make

light of it no more. If we offered you bad wares, we should desire a dark shop; and if our gold were light or bad, we would not call for the ballance and the Touchstone. But when we are sure the things that we speak are *true*, we desire nothing more then Tryal. Beauty and comliness have no advantage of loathsom deformity, when they are both together in the dark: but the light will shew the difference. Error may be a loser by the light, and therefore shuns it, *John* 3. 19, 20, 21. But truth is a gainer by it and therefore seeks it. Let Papists hide the Scriptures from the people, and forbid the reading of them in a tongue which they understand, and teach them to speak to God they know not what; we dare not do so, nor do we desire it: our Doctrine will not go off well in the dark; and therefore we call you to the Law and to the Testimony, and desire you to take our words into the light, and see whether they be according to the Word of the Lord. Nothing troubleth us more then that we cannot perswade our hearers to this tryal. Some of them are so hardened in their sin and misery, that they will not be at so much labour as to open their Bibles, and try whether we say true or not. Some of them will not trouble their minds with the thoughts of it; Psal. 10. 4. *God is not in all their thoughts.* And some are already too wise to learn; they will not so long abate their confidence of their former opinions; though, poor souls, their ignorance doth threaten their damnation. And some are so engaged in a sinful party, that their companions will not give them leave to make so much question of the way that they are in: and some will scarce take the Scripture for the Rule by which they must try and be tried; but look more to custom, and the will of those in power over them. And most are unwilling to try, because they are unwilling to know the truth, and cannot endure to find themselves miserable, nor see the sin which they would not leave, nor see the duty which they love not to practice. And thus we cannot

ot get them to try whether the things that we teach hem be so.

For want of this it is, that Men deceive themselves, nd think their Case to be safe when it is miserable, ecause they will not try it by the Word. This nakes them *rage, and be confident in their Folly*, Prov. 4. 16. and *laugh and sing at the Brink of Hell*, and *wim as merrily down the Stream to the devouring Gulf, if no Evil were near them.* This makes them in he *depth of Misery* to have no *pity* on *themselves*, and o do so little to escape it; tho' they have time and neans, and helps at hand, yet there are not Hearts in hem to make use of them; yea, they run themselves ally further on the Score; and all because we can- ot get them to *search the Scripture*, and try whether in be so small a matter, and whether this will not be *itterness* in the end. Hence it is, that they are so asily drawn by a Temptation, and that they dislike holy Life, and have base Thoughts of them that re most diligent for Salvation, and are most precious n the Eyes of God; and that they can even deride he way that they should walk in, *Prov.* 1. 22. *Psal.* 1. . because they will not *search the Scripture*, to see what it saith to these matters. The *Word* is a *Light*, nd would do much to open their *Eyes*, and win them over to God, if they would but come to it with a de- re to know the Truth. You think that the *Ungodly* hat are rich and great, are in a better Condition han a *Godly Man* that is *poor* and *despised*. And why s this? But because you will not go into the *San- tuary*, and see in what a *slippery place* they stand, and *what will be the end of these Men*, Psal. 73. 16, 17, 22. n a word, this is the undoing of *Millions of Souls*. They are all their Life-time out of the *way to Heaven*, nd yet will not be perswaded to ask the *way*; but they run and wink, and put it to the venture. Many thousand are gone out of the World, before they ever spent the *quantity of one Day*, in *trying by the Scri- ture*, whether their State were good, and their Way

were right. Nay, let their Teachers tell them that they must be *sanctified*, and take another *course*, they will differ from their *Teachers*, tho' they be never so wise or learned; and they will contradict them, and not believe or regard them. And yet we cannot get them to come to us, and put the Case to the Tryal and let the *Scripture* be the Judge. Would they but do this, they could never sure have such *hard Thoughts* of *their Teachers*, and be offended at their plainest closest dealing. You would then say, [*I see now that Minister says not thus of himself; he speaks but that which God commandeth him: And if he would not deliver the Message of the Lord, he were unworthy and unfit to be his Embassador: He were cruel to me, if he would not pull me out of the Fire, by the plainest closest means.* Jude 23. *He hated me, if he would not rebuke me, but suffer Sin upon me*, Levit. 19. 17. *If he would please Men, he should not be the Servant of Christ*, Gal. 1. 10. *I know it is no pleasure to him to trouble me, or to provoke me: But it would be his own destruction if he tell me not of my danger*, Ezek. 3. 18. *And I have no Reason to wish him to damn his own Soul, and suffer me to do the like by mine, and all for fear of displeasing me in my sin.*] These would be your Thoughts, if you would but try our Words by the Scripture, and see whether we speak not the Mind of God.

And sure it would go somewhat deeper in your Hearts, and it would stick by you, and be more before your Eyes, when you once understood that it is the *Word of God*.

This then is my Request to you, Sirs, that the *Work of your Conversion* may not miscarry, that *you* would carry all that *you* hear to the *Scripture*, and search there, and see whether it be so or not; that so *you* may be put out of doubt, and may be at a *certainty*, and not stand *wavering*; and that *your Faith* may be resolved into the *Authority of God*; and so the Work may be Divine, and consequently powerful and prevailing, when the Ground and Motive

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ive is Divine. If you be not satisfied in the Doctrin which the *Minister* delivereth to *you*, first search the *Scripture* your selves; and if that will not do, go to him, and desire him to shew *you* his Grounds for it in the *Word of God*, and joyn with *you* in *Prayer* for a right understanding of it. Do *you* question whether there be so severe a Judgment, and a Heaven and a Hell, as Ministers tell you? Search the Scripture, in *Mat.* 25. & 2 *Thess.* 1. 8, 9, 10. *John* 5. 29. *Mat.* 13. Do *you* question whether a Man may not be saved without *Conversion*, *Regeneration*, and *Holiness?* Open *your Bibles*, and see what *God* saith, *John* 3. 3, 6. *Mat.* 18. 3. 2 *Cor.* 5. 17. *Rom.* 8. 9. *Heb.* 12. 14. Do *you* think a Man may be *saved without Knowledge?* Let *Scripture* judge, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3, 4. *John* 17. 3. *Hos.* 4. 6. Do *you* think a Man *may be saved that doth as the most do*, and goeth in the common way of the World? *Search* the *Scripture* and see, *Mat.* 7. 13. and 20. 16. and 22. 14. *Luke* 12 32. Do *you* think an *unhumbled Soul may be saved*, that never was *contrite* and *broken-hearted* for Sin? Try by *Isa.* 57. 15. and 66. 2. *Psal.* 51. 17. *Luke* 4. 18. *Mat.* 11. 28. Do *you* think a Man can be the *Servant of God*, that liveth a *fleshly Life*, and *will* keep his Sin? Try by *Rom.* 8. 13. *John* 3. 12. *Eph.* 5. 5, 6. 1 *John* 3. 9, 10. Do *you* doubt whether it be *necessary* to make so much *adoe* to be *saved*, and to be so strict, and make *Religion* our chiefest Business? Try by *Psal.* 1. 1, 2, 3. 1 *Pet.* 4. 18. *Heb.* 12. 14. *Luke* 10. 42. *Luke* 13. 24. *Eph.* 5. 15, 16. Do *you* think a Man *can be saved* that is a *Worldling?* Whose Heart is more on Earth than Heaven. Try by 1 *John* 2. 15. *Phil.* 3. 19. *Col.* 3. 1. *Luke* 14. 26, 33. Do *you* doubt whether *you* should serve God with *your Families?* And *instruct* them, and *pray* with them? Try by *Jos.* 24. 15. *Deut.* 6. 7. *Dan.* 6. 10, 11. *Exod.* 20. 10.

Thus if *you* will in all these weighty Matters, but *go to the Scriptures*, and see whether it say as *your Teachers* say, *you* might soon be resolved, and that by

the sureſt *Authority* in the World. If *you* think that *your Miniſters* may be deceived, I hope *you* will confeſs that *God cannot be deceived!* If *you* think that *your Miniſters are paſſionate, or ſelf-conceited, or ſpeak out of ill will to you*, I hope *you* dare not ſay ſo by the *Lord*: He owes *you* no *ill will*, nor ſpeaks a *word* but what is moſt *ſure*. If *you* think us *partial*, ſure *God is impartial!* What better *Judge* can *you* have now, than he that is *infallible*, and muſt *judge you* all at the laſt? If any Papiſt put it into *your* Head to ask, [*who ſhall be judge of the Sence of Scripture*] I anſwer, *Who ſhall be Judge of the Judge of all the World?* The Law is made to *judge you*, and not to be *judged by you*. None can be the proper *Judges* of the Sence of a *Law*, but the Maker of it: Tho' others muſt judge their Caſes *by the Law*. Your Work is to *diſcern* it, and *underſtand* and *obey it*; and our Work is to *help you* to *underſtand it*; but its neither our *Work*, nor *yours*, to be the proper, or *abſolute Judges of it*. At leaſt where it ſpeaks plain, it needs no judge.

Come then to the *Word in Meekneſs* and *Humility*, with a teachable Frame of Spirit, and a willingneſs to know the *Truth*, and a Reſolution to ſtand to it, and yield to what ſhall be revealed to *you*, and *beg of God* to ſhew *you* his Will, and lead *you* into the *Truth*, and *you* will find that he will be found of them that ſeek him.

Direct. 3. If *you* would not have the Work of *your* Converſion miſcarry; *my* next Advice is this:

See that you be much in the ſerious Conſideration of the Truths which you underſtand, betwixt God and you in ſecret.

I have often ſpoken of this heretofore; but becauſe I apprehend it to be a Point of exceeding great *Concernment*, I ſhall be longer on it again, than on the reſt.

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The greatest *matters* in the world will not work much upon him that will not *think* of them. *Consideration* opens the ear that was stopt; and the *heart* that was *shut up*: It sets the *powers* of the *Soul a work*, and wakeneth it from the sleep of *Incogitancy* and *security*. The *Thoughts* are the first actings of the *Soul*, that set a work the rest. Thinking on the matters that must make us *wise*, and do the *work of God* on the *heart*, is that which lieth on us to do in order to our *Conversion*. By *Consideration* a sinner makes *use* of the *Truth*, which before lay by, and therefore could do nothing. By *Consideration* he taketh *in* the *Medicine* to his *Soul*, which before stood by, and could not work. By *Consideration* a man makes use of his *Reason*, which before was laid asleep, and therefore could not do its work. When the *Master's* from home the *Scholars* will be at play. When the *Coach-man* is asleep, the *Horses* may miss the way, and possibly break his neck and their own. If the *plowman* go his way, the Oxen will stand still, or make but bad unhandsome work. So when *Reason* laid *asleep*, out of the way, what may not the *Appetite* do? And what may not the *Passions* do? and what may not *Temptations* do with the *Soul*? A *wise man* when he is asleep, hath as little use of his *wisdom* as a *fool*. A *learned* man when he is asleep can hardly *dispute* with an *unlearned* man that is awake. A strong man that's never so *skilful* at his *weapons*, is scarce able in his sleep to deal with the *weakest child* that is awake. Why all the *powers* of *your* Soul are as it were *asleep*, till *Consideration* awake them, and set them on work. And what the better are *you* for being *men* and having *Reason*, if you have not the *Use* of your *Reason* when *you need it*? As men are *Inconsiderate* because they are *wicked*, so they are the more *wicked* because they are *inconsiderate*. The keenest sword, the greatest Cannon, will do no execution against an enemy, while they lie by and are not used. There is a *mighty power* in the *Word of God*, and the *example of Christ*, to pull down *strong holds*,

and conquer the *strongest lusts*, and *corruptions*. But they will not do this while they are *forgotten* and *neglected*. Will *Heaven* entice the man that thinks not of it? Will *Hell* deter the man that thinks not of it? Why is it that all the *reasoning* in the world, will do no more good on a man that is deaf, then if *you* said nothing? But because the passage to his *Thoughts* and understanding is stopt up. And if you have *eyes* and *see* not, and *ears* and *hear* not, and willfully cast it out of *your* thought, what good can any thing do to *you* that is spoken? It is not holding *your meat* in *your* mouth that will *nourish you*, if *you* will not let it down: nor taking it into *your stomack*, if you will not keep it but presently cast it up again: But it must be kept till it be *digested* and *distributed*. So it is not the most excellent *Truths* in the world that will change *your hearts*, if *you* let them not down to *your hearts*, and keep them not there by *Meditation* till they are digested and turned into *spiritual life*. The plaister must be laid upon the *sore* if you would be cured. The wound and sickness is at *your Heart*? and if *you* will not take *in* the word to *your heart*, where the sickness is, I know not how *you* should expect a *cure*. The Soul will not be *charmed* into *Holiness*, by the bare hearing or saying over a few good *words*, as wizzards use to cure *diseases*, or seem to *cure* them. It must be *Truth* at the *Heart* that must change the *Heart*. And if *you* will not *Think* on and think on it again, how can *you* expect it should come at *your heart*;

You say you would gladly have *Christ* and *grace*, and are ready to lay the blame on *God*, because he doth not give it *you*, and say, We cannot convert our selves; But would *you* have the *Spirit* come in, while *you* hold the door against him? He knocks and desireth *you* to open and let him in, and *you* wish him to come in; but you *bolt* the *door*, and no intreaty will procure *you* to *open it*. It is *Consideration* of the saving doctrine of the *Gospel*, that openeth the *heart*, and giveth it entertainment. Set your selves therefore on purpose

to

to this work, and open the doors of *your heart* which are now shut, and let the King of *Glory* come in. Who will believe that you love the *Light*, when *you* shut the *windows*, and draw the *curtains*? If *you* will set *your* selves to consider of the *Truth*, the windows of *your Soul* will be set open, and then the light will certainly come in. Now *you* read over whole *Chapters*, and hear *Sermon* after *Sermon*, and either they never stir you, or at least, its but a little for a fit, like a man that hath a little warmed him at a fire in the winter, and when he goes from it is colder then before: But if *you* would but set *your* selves to *consider* of what *you hear* or *read*, one line of a *Chapter*, or one sentence of a *Sermon* would lay *you* in *tears*, or make *you* groan, or at least do more then now is done. *Satan* hath garrisoned the heart of every *carnal man*: And *consideration* is the principal means to cast him out. If by considering of the terrible threatnings of the *word*, *you* would discharge these Canons of *God* against them, what a battery would it make in the *Corruptions* of *your Souls*! Our God is a *consuming fire*, and the fire of hell is threatned in his Law as the wages of sin: By *serious Consideration you* may as it were, fetch fire from *God* and from his *word*, and set to the very gates of *Satans* garison, and fire him out of many of his holds.

But because this is so needful a point, I shall be so large upon it, as 1°. to tell you some of those things that you should consider of. 2°. To tell *you* in what manner *you* should do it. And 3°. to give *you* some *Motives* to put *you* on.

1. The first thing that I would have *you* oft to think on, is, *The Nature of that God with whom you have to do*. Consider that if he be the most *wise*, it is all the reason in the World that he should *rule you*. If he *be good*, and *infinitely good*, there is all the reason in the World that *you* should *love him*; and there is no shew of reason, that you should love the World, or Sin before him. If he be *faithful* and *true*, his *Threatnings* must be feared, and his *Promises* must not be *distrusted*;

and there is no reason that you should make any question of his *Word*. If he be *holy*, then *Holiness* must needs be most *excellent*, and those that are the *holiest* must needs be the best, because they are most *like* to *God*; and then he must be an Enemy to Sin, and to all that are unholy, because they are contrary to his Nature. Consider that he is *Almighty*, and there is no *resisting* him, or standing out against him; in the twink of an Eye can he snatch thy *guilty Soul* from *thy Body*, and cast it where Sin is better known. A word of his *Mouth* can set all the World against thee; and set thine own *Conscience* against thee too: A Frown of his Face can turn thee into *Hell*. And if he be thine *Enemy*, it is no matter who is *thy Friend*; for all the World cannot *save thee*, if he do but *condemn thee*. They are *blessed* whom he *blesseth*, and they are *cursed* indeed whom he *curseth*. He was from *Eternity*, and thou art but as it were of *yesterday*; *thy* being is from him; *thy* Life is always in his hands, thou canst not live an hour without him, thou canst not fetch a breath without him, nor think a thought, nor speak a word, nor stir a Foot or Hand without him: Thou may'st better live without *Bread*, or *Drink*, or *Fire*, or *Air*, or *Earth*, or *Water*, than without him. All the World is before him, but as the Drop of a Bucket, or a little Sand of Dust, that should be laid in ballance with all the Earth: Hadst thou but compassed about this lower World, and seen all the Nations of it, and its wonderful Furniture, and seen the great Deeps of the mighty Ocean, and the abundance of Creatures that be in all? O what thoughts then wouldst thou have of God! But if thou hadst been above the *Stars*, and seen the *Sun* in all its Glory, and seen the Frame and Course of those higher *Orbs*, and seen the blessed glorious *Angels*, and all the Inhabitants of the higher World, O then what Thoughts of *God* wouldst thou entertain? O but if it were possible that thou hadst seen his *Glory*, or seen but his Back-parts, as *Moses* did, or seen him in *Christ* the

now

now *glorified Redeemer*, what Apprehensions wouldst thou have of him then? Then how wouldst thou abhor the Name of *Sin*; and how weary wouldst thou be of the pleasantest Life that Sensuality could afford thee? Then thou wouldst *quickly* know, that no Love can be great enough, and no Praises can be high enough, and no Service can be holy and good enough for such a *God*; then *you* would soon know, that this is not a *God* to be neglected, or dallied with; nor a *God* to be resisted, nor provoked by the wilful breaking of his Laws. It is *Eternal Life* to know this *God*, *John* 17. 3. and for want of knowing him, it is that *Sin* aboundeth in the World. This maketh *Holiness* so scarce and lean: Men *worship they care not how*, because *they worship they know not whom*. O therefore dwell on the *Meditations of the Almighty*. So far as he doth *possess thy mind*, there will be no *place for sin and vanity*. One would think, *if I should set you no further task*, and tell you of no other matter for your *Meditation*, this one should be enough: for this *one* is in a manner all. What will not the *due knowledge of God* do upon the *Soul*? That is the best *Christian*, and the most happy man that knoweth most of him: and that's the most vile and miserable wretch that is furthest from him, and strangest to him: it is the Character of the fool of fools, to have an heart whose disposition and practice saith, *There is no God*, *Psal.* 14. 1. that is to be so affected and employed in their *hearts*, as if there were no *God*: and when *God* is not in all his thoughts, *Psal.* 10. 4. It was better with man when he had less knowledge, for himself, and fewer thoughts for himself, and more of *God*. And there is no way to restore us to *sound understanding*, and to perfect our *knowledge*, but to turn our eye upon *God* again: for in *knowing him*, we know all that's worth the *knowing*. Take hold then of the *blessed God* in thy *Meditations*, and fill thy *thoughts* with him, and dwell upon those *thoughts*. Remember he is alwaies with thee: and where-ever thou art, or what ever

thou art doing, most certainly he seeth thee. As sure as thou art there, the *Lord* is there. He knows thy *thoughts*: he hears thy *words*, he sees all thy ways. And is such a *God* as this is to be provoked and despised! Were it not better provoke and despite all the world? Is his favour to be slighted? Were it not better to lose the *favour* of all the *World*? Consider of this.

2. Another thing that I would have you oft think of, is, *what end you were made for, and what business it is that you came for into the world.* You may well think that *God* made you not in vain: and that he made you for no lower end, then for *himself*: and that he would never have made you, nor so long preserved you, if he had not cared what you do. He would never have *endued* you with a *reasonable* and *immortal soul*, but for some high, and noble, and immortal end. Surely it was that you might be *happy* in knowing him, that he made you capable of knowing him: for he made nothing in *vain*. It is useful to a horse to know his pasture and Provender, and work, and perhaps his Master; but he needs not know whether there be a *God*: and accordingly he is qualified. But it is sure mans chief concernment to know that there is a *God*, and what he is, and how to serve him, and what he is, and will be to us: or else we should never have been capable of such things. And he would never have made *you* capable of loving him, but that *you* should be exercised and made happy in that Love. The frame and faculties, and capacity of *your Souls*, and the scope of *Scripture*, do all declare, that *you* were sent into this world, to seek after *God*, and to Love him, and obey him, and rejoyce in him in *your* measure; and to prepare for a life of nearer *Communion*, where you may Enjoy him and please him in the highest perfection. Consider with *your* selves, whether a life of sin be that which *you* were made for? Or whether *God* sent *you* hither to break his *Laws*, and follow *your* own

own *lusts*. And whether the satisfying of *your* flesh and the gathering of a little worldly wealth, and the feathering of a nest which *you* must so quickly leave, be like to be the business that *you* were sent about into the world.

3. The next thing that I would have *you* consider of, is, *How you have answered the Ends of your Creation, and how you have done the business that you came into the world to do.* Look back upon the drift of *your hearts* and *lives*: read over the most ancient *records* of *your consciences*: and see what *you* have been, and what *you* have been doing in the world till now. Have *you* spent *your* days in *seeking after God*? and *your* estates and strength in *faithful serving him*? Have *you* lived all this time in the *admirations* of his *excellencies*, and the *fervent love* of him, and *delightful remembrance* of him, and the *zealous worship* of him? If *you* had done this, *you* had not need of a *Conversion*. But consider; Have *you* not forgotten what *business* you had in the *world*, and little minded the *world* that *you* should have prepared for, and lived as if *you* knew not him that *made you*, or why he *made you*? was *sport* and *merriment* the end that you were created for? was *ease* and *Idleness*, or *eating*, or *drinking*, or *vain discourses* or *recreation*, the business that you came into the world about? was living to the *flesh* and scraping up *riches*, or gaping after the *esteem of men*, the work that *God* sent *you* hither to do? Was this it that he *preserved* you for, and *daily* gave *you* in *provision* for? What was it to *forget* him and *slight* him, and turn him out of your hearts, and rob him of his *service* and *honour*; and to set up *your* flesh in his stead, and give that to it that was due to him? Bethink you what *you* have done, and whether *you* have done the *work* that *you* were sent to do, or not.

4. The next thing *you* should use to Consider of is, *How grievously you have sinned, and what a case it is that your sin hath brought you into.* If *you* take but an impartial view of *your lives*, *you* may see how far *you* have mist

miſt *your marks*, and how far *you* have been from what *you* ſhould have been; and how little *you* have done of that which was *your buſineſs*: and O what abundance of aggravations have *your* ſins! which I ſhall paſs over now, *becauſe* I muſt mention them under another head. It is not only ſome actual out-breakings againſt the bent of *your heart* and *life*; but *your* very *heart* was falſe and gone from *God*, and *ſet in you to do evil*.

O the *time* that you have *loſt*; the means and *help*, that *you* have *neglected*; the *motions* that *you* have *reſiſted*; the ſwarms of evil thoughts that have filled *your imaginations*; the ſtreams of vain and evil words that have flowed from *your* mouth; the works of darkneſs, in publick and in ſecret that God hath ſeen you in! And all this while, how empty were *you* in *inward holineſs*, and how barren of *good works*, to God or men? What have you done with all *your talents*? and how little or nothing hath *God* had of all?

And now conſider what a caſe you are in, while *you* remain *unconverted*; *you* have made *your* ſelves the ſinks of ſin, the ſlaves of *Satan*, and the fleſh; and are skilful in nothing but doing evil; if *you* be called to *prayer* or holy *meditation*, *your hearts* are againſt it, and *you* are not uſed to it, and therefore *you* know not how to do it to any purpoſe: But to think the thoughts of *luſt* or covetouſneſs, or *hatred*, or *malice*, or *revenge*, this *you* can do without any toile: To ſpeak of the *world*, or of *your ſports* and *pleaſures*, or againſt thoſe that *you* bare *ill will to*, this *you* can do without any ſtudy: You are ſuch as are ſpoken of, *Jer.* 4. 22. *My people is fooliſh: they have not known me: they are ſottiſh children, and they have no underſtanding: they are wiſe to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.*] You are grown ſtrangers to the *God* that made you, in whoſe love and ſervice you ſhould live and find your chief delights. Your *hearts* are hardned, and *you* are dead in *your ſins*: The guilt of the ſins of *your* lives are ſtill upon *you*: You can neither look into *your hearts* or *lives*, no not one day of *your lives*, or the

beſt

best hour that *you* have spent, but you must see the ugly face of *sin*, which deserveth condemnation. You have made *God your Enemy* that should have been *your* only *felicity*: And yet *you* are always at his *mercy* and in his *hands*. Little do you know how long his patience will yet endure *you*; or what hour he will call away *your Souls*: And if *death* come, alas, what a case will it find *you* in! how lamentably unready are *you* to meet him! how unready to appear before the dreadful *God* whom *you* have offended; and what a terrible appearance do you think that will be to *you*? most certainly if you die before *you* are *converted*, *you* will not be from among the *Devils* and *damned souls* an hour. The *Law* hath cursed you already: and the *execution* will be answerable, if *you* die in *your sins*. And thus *you* may see the gain of *sin*, and what it is that *you* have been doing all this while, for *your* own *Souls*; and what a case it is that *you* have brought *your* selves into; and what need *you* have speedily to look about *you*.

5. The next step of your *Consideration* should be this, *Bethink your selves what a blessed Condition you might be in, if by conversion you were but recovered from this misery, and brought home to God.* This moved the heart of the Prodigal son to return, *Luke* 15. 16, 17. [*When he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger.*] He that had not husks to feed on with the swine, considered the plenty that he had forsaken at home. The poorest member of the *houshold* of *Christ* is in a better condition then the greatest *King* on earth that is *unconverted*. You might have lived another kind of life, then you have done, for safety, and benefit, and true content, if you would have turned your minds and *life to God*. Were you but *Converted*, you would be the living members of *Christ*, and his *precious benefits* would be *yours*; His *blood* would cleanse *you* from all *your sins* and they would be all freely forgiven *you*: *God* would be *Reconciled* to *you*, and become *your* friend, yea *your Father* and *your God*; and will take

you

you for his *houshold servants*, and *adopted Children*: the *Holy Ghost* would dwell in *you*, and guide *your understandings*, and shew *you* that which flesh and blood cannot reveal, and bring you into acquaintance with the *mysteries* of *God*: He will be a *Spirit of Light* and *Life* within *you*, and work *your* hearts yet more to *God*, and give *you* yet stronger inclinations and affections to the things above. He will help *you* when *you* are *weak*, and quicken *you* where you are *dull*, and be *your* remembrancer when you are *forgetful* of necessary things. He will help you in *prayer*, both for *matter* and for *manner*, and help *you* in *Meditation*, and conference and other duties; he will warn *you* of *your danger*, and strengthen *you* against *temptations*, and cause *you* to overcome; and if *you fall*, he will cause *you* to *rise* again: he will be an *in-dwelling comforter* to *you*, and so effectually speak *peace* to *you* in the midst of *your disquietness*, that by speaking it, he will create it in *you*. And in the multitude of *your* thougths within *you*, his *comforts* will delight *your Souls*. O what a life might *you* live, if *Christ* by his *Spirit* did once live in *you*! you may easily conjecture how tender *Christ* would be of his own members, how dearly he would *love them*, how constantly he would *watch over them*, how *plentifully* he would *provide for them*, and how *safely* he would *preserve* them. And if *you* should come into a *rougher way*, he would *lead you* out: *Afflictions* should never be laid on *you* but for *your good*; and continue no longer then *your* need continueth them, and be taken off at last to *your satisfaction* and *contentment*. Indeed *your life* would be a life of *mercies*: and that which is but a common *mercy* to common men, would be a *special Mercy* to you, ascoming from *your Fathers love*, and furthering *your salvation*, and hinting out to *you your everlasting Mercies*. You could not open *your* eyes, but *you* would see that which may *encourage* and *comfort* you, all the *works* of *God* which *you* behold, would shew *you* his *Majesty*, his *love* and *power*, and lead *you* to himself. You could not open *your* Bible, but *you* would find in it,

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the *blessed lines of Love* : O what good it would do *you*, to read there the *blessed Attributes of your God !* to look upon his *Name* ; to peruse the description of his most *perfect nature !* what good would it do *you* to read of the *nature*, and *incarnation*, and *life*, and *death*, and *resurrection*, and *ascention*, and *intercession*, and *return* of your *blessed Redeemer* ? what good would it do you to find those *holy Rules* which *your* new nature is agreeable to, and to read over the *Law*, that is written in *your hearts*, and read the *curse* from which *you* are *delivered* ? what *life* and *joy* would *your Souls* receive from the many, and full, and free *promises of grace !* were *you* once but truly *sanctified* and made new, *your* condition would be *often comfortable*, but always safe: and when *you* were in the *greatest fears* and *perplexities*, you would still be fast in the *arms of Christ* ? And what a *life* would that be, to have daily access to *God* in *prayer* : to have leave in all *your wants* and *dangers*, to seek to him with a promise of hearing and success; that you may be sure of much more from him, then a child can from the *tenderest father*, or a *wife* from the most *loving husband* upon earth ? What a life would it be, when *you* may always think on *God* as *your felicity*, and fetch *your* highest *delights* from whom the ungodly have their greatest *terrours* ? And it is no contemptible part of *your* benefits that *you* may live among his people, and in their special love, and have a special *Communion* with them, and *interest* in their *prayers*, and may possess among them the *priviledges* of the *Saints*, and the *Ordinances* of *God* : That instead of *idle talk*, and the unprofitable fellowship of the children and works of *darkness*, you may joyn with the *Church of God* in his *Praises*, and feed with them at his *table* on the *body* and *blood of Christ*, and then have conveyances of *renewed grace*, and a *renewed pardon* sealed to *your Souls* : But how long should I stay, if I should tell *you* but one half the *blessings* of a *Sanctified* and *spiritual state* ? In a word, *God* would be *yours*, *Christ* would be *yours*, the *Holy Ghost* would be *yours*, all

things

things would be *yours*; the whole world would have some relation to your well-fare; *Devils* would be subdued to *you* and cast out of *your Souls*; *sin* would be both *pardoned* and *overcome*; *Angels* would be ministring spirits unto *you* for *your good*: The *promises* of *Scripture* would be *yours*; and *everlasting Glory* would at last be *yours*; and while *you* staid on earth, *you* might comfort *your* selves as oft as you would, with the believing fore sight of that *unconceivable*, *unspeakable*, *endless* Felicity.

O Sirs, what a *Treasure* have I here expressed in a few words! What *Hearts* would *you* have, if *you* were but possessed, lively and sensible of all that is contained in this Leaf or two! You would not envy the greatest Prince on Earth his Glory, nor change States with any Man that were a Stranger to these things. Did *you* but use to consider of the *State* of the *Saints*, how could *you* keep off, and stay with *Sin*, and make so *many delays* in *turning unto God*! Sure this Consideration might turn the Scales.

6. The next part of *your* Meditation should be, *Of the gracious and wonderful Work of our Redemption, and the Means and Remedies which are provided for your Souls, and the Terms on which Salvation may be obtained.*

For all the Sins that *you* have committed, *you* are not given over to *despair*; the Lord hath not left *you* without a *Remedy*. Your *Conversion* and *Salvation* is not a thing *impossible*. Nay so much is done *by Christ already*, that it is brought upon *reasonable Terms* even to *your Hands*. A new and living way is consecrated for us *by Christ*, through the Veil of his Flesh, and *by* his *Blood* we may have boldness to enter into the Holiest, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20. He hath born *your Burden*, and offereth *you* instead of it his *Burden*, which is light, *Mat.* 11. 28. He hath removed the *Impossibility*, and nailed to his *Cross* the *Hand-writting* that was against *you*, Col. 2. 14, 15. And instead of it offereth *you* his *easie Yoke*. He hath spoiled the *Principalities* and

Powers,

Powers that had captivated *you*, and openly triumphed over them on the *Cross*. You are not left under the care of making *satisfaction* to God for *your* own *Sins*, but only of accepting the *Redeemer* that hath satisfied. This much I dare confidently *say* to *you* all, without extending his *Benefits* too far. It will be for want of *Faith in you*, and not for want of *Satisfaction* by the *Redeemer*, if any of *you* perish. And how free are his *Offers?* How full are his *Promises?* You are conditionally all *pardoned* and *justified* already, as is legible under the hand of God. And the *Condition* which is imposed on *you*, is not *some meritorious or mercenary Work*, but *the accepting of the Benefit freely given, according to its nature, use, and end.* This is the *Faith* by which *you* must be *justified*. These are the *Terms* on which *you may be saved*. And which is more, the Lord hath provided *Means*, even excellent, and plentiful, and powerful *Means*, for the furthering of *your Souls*, in the performance of this Condition, and helping *you* to believe and repent, that *you may live:* And if the Spirit make not these Means effectual, and adjoyn not his Special Grace, and after this *you* remain *unconverted*, it will not be long of him, but of *your selves*. So that *you may* perceive how hopeful a case you are *yet* in, by the *Blood* of *your Redeemer*, if *you* destroy not your own hopes, and make not *your* Case desperate *by wilful Impenitency*, and refusal of *Free-Grace*. How fair are *you yet* for *Heaven!* And what happy Advantages have *you* for *Salvation?* Its brought even to *your Doors*; its thrust it self into *your Hands:* The *Redeemer* hath done so much for *you* all, as to bring *your Salvation* to the Choice of *your own Wills*; and if *you* be his *chosen Ones* he will also make *you* willing. You have Precepts to believe, *you* are threatned if *you* will not believe, *you* have Promise upon Promise, and Christ himself offereth *you* Pardon, and Life, and Salvation with him, if *you* are but truly and heartily willing. You have *God* himself condescending to *beseech you to accept them:* And *Embassadors* intreating *you* in his

name

name and stead, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19, 20. You have *Ordinances* fitted to *your* Necessities, both *Reading*, and *Preaching*, and *Sacraments*, and *Prayer*. You have store of plain and powerful *Books*; *you* have the Godly about *you*, most desirous to assist *you*, that would be glad to see or hear of *your* Conversion: You have the sight of the Wicked, that are wallowing in their own Dung, and the Dirt of the World, to make *you* hate such Beastly ways. You have *Reason* and *Conscience* within *you* to consider of these Matters, and set them *Home*, and apply them to *your selves*; you have *time* and *strength* to do all this, if *you* will not abuse it, and provoke God to take it from *you* for *your* negligence. You have Mercies of many sorts, outward and inward, to win upon *you*, and encourage *you* in the Work! And sometime *Afflictions* to remember *you*, and awaken *you*, and spur *you* on; the Devil and all *your* Enemies are so far disabled, that they cannot destroy *you* against *your Wills*, nor keep *you* from Christ, but by your own *Consents*. The *Angels* of Heaven are ready to *help you*, and would even rejoice at *your Conversion*. This is your Case, and these are your Helps and Encouragements: You are not shut up under desperation. God never told you, *It is in vain to think of Conversion*; *it is too late*. If any have told you so, it was the *Devil*, and not *God*; and one would think, that such *Considerations* as these, should drive the Nail to the Head, and be effectual to move *you* to resolve and turn.

7. The last thing that I would set before you to be considered, is, *What's like to be the end of it, if after all this you should die unconverted.*

O Sirs, your Hearts are not able now to conceive of it, nor the Tongue of any mortal Man to utter it. But so much of it we can certainly utter, as one would think should make your *Hearts to tremble*. You have seen it may be a *dying Man*, in what *Pangs* and *Agonies* he parteth with his *Soul*: And you have seen its like, the Corps that was left there behind; and seen it

it laid in the common Earth. But you ſee not what became of the *Soul*, nor what an appearance it made in *another World*, nor what *Company* did attend it, nor what a *place* or *ſtate* it paſt into. O Sirs, when the *Hour* is at hand, that this muſt be your *own Caſe*, it will awaken you to other kind of Affections than you have, or can have at the reading of theſe words. It's wonderful, that a little diſtance ſhould make us ſo inſenſible of that change which we are all certain will come to paſs: And yet through the *folly* and *deadneſs* of our Hearts it is ſo; but they are other kind of Thoughts of theſe weighty Matters, which we ſhall have the next Hour after *Death*, than the livelieſt Affections before-hand can afford us.

The *Miſery* was great that the Redeemer did find you in, and which you deſerved by your *Sin* againſt the *Law of the Creator*. But if you be found *unconverted* at laſt, your Puniſhment will be much ſorer, and your Caſe far worſe than it was before. The *Redeemers Law* or *Goſpel*, hath its peculiar *Threatning*, which differeth from the Law of the *meer Creator* in ſeveral reſpects: Even 1. In the nature of the *puniſhment*, which will be Torments of *Conſcience* for the neglect of a *Redeemer*, and recovering Grace, which you ſhould never have felt if you had never been *redeemed*. 2. And in the degree of the *Puniſhment*, which will be far ſorer, *Heb.* 10. 29. And, 3. In the *Remedileſneſs* of it, the Sentence being *irreverſible* and *peremptory*; the firſt Law indeed provided no *Remedy*, but it did not exclude *Remedy*, nor make it impoſſible, but the Law of Chriſt doth poſitively and expreſly exclude all *Remedy*, and leave the *Soul* that goeth unconverted out of the Body, to utter *Deſperation* and *Miſery*, without help or hope of end. But I ſhall not ſtand now to deſcribe to you the *Terrors* of *Judgment*, or of *Hell*, becauſe I have done it already in other *Books*, which I deſire you to fetch the reſt of this *Meditation* from; that is, my *Treatiſe of Judgment*, and the *beginning* of my *third Part* of my *Book of Reſt*.

II. Ha-

II. Having told you what should be the *Matter of your Consideration*, I shall next tell *you* (but briefly) in what *Manner you* should perform it. And here I shall not stand to prescribe *you* any long or exact *Method* for *Meditation*, both because it agreeth not with my present resolved brevity, and because the Persons that I now deal with, are not capable of observing such *Rules*; and if any desire such *Helps*, they may transfer the *Directions* which are given on another Subject in my Book of *Rest*, to the Subject now in hand.

1. Do not stay till such *thoughts* will come of themselves into *your minds*, but *set your selves purposely to consider of these matters*. Take some time to call *your Souls* to an account concerning their present state, and their preparations for *Eternity*. If a Heathen *Seneca* could call himself every night *to an account for the evil committed* and the *good omitted in the day past*, as he professeth that he ordinarily did: why may not even an *Unconverted man*, that hath the helps which are now among *us*, bethink himself of the *State of his Soul*? But I know that a *Carnal heart* is exceeding backward to *serious consideration*, and is loth to be troubled with such *thoughts* as these; and the Devil will do what he can to hinder it, by himself and others: but yet if men would but do what they may do, it might be better with them then it is. Will you but now and then purposely withdraw *your* selves from company into some secret place, and there set the *Lord before your eyes*, and call *your souls* to a *strict account* about the matters that I have mentioned even now, and make it *your business* to exercise *your Reason* upon them; and as *you Purposely* go to Church to hear, so *Purposely* set *your* selves to this duty of *Consideration*, as a necessary thing?

2. When *you* are upon it, labour to waken *your Souls*, and to be very *Serious* in all *your Thoughts*; and do not think of the *Matters of Salvation*, as *you* would do of an ordinary trivial business, which *you* do not much regard, or care how it goes. But remember

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that *your Life* lieth on it, even *your everlasting Life*: And therefore call up the most earnest of *your thoughts*, and rouse up all the *powers of your Souls*, and suffer them not to draw back, but command them to the work; And then set the seven Points that I mentioned even now before you; And as *you* think of them, labour to be *Affected* with them in some measure according to their exceeding weight. As *Moses* said to *Israel Deut.* 32. 46. *Set your Hearts to all the words which I testifie among you this day; which ye shall command your children to do,* &c. *For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life.* And as Christ said, *Luke* 9. 44. *Let these sayings sink into your ears.* So I say to *you*, Let the Matters which you think of, go to your *hearts*, and sink down to the quick of *your* affections.

And if *your hearts* would slip away from the work, and other thoughts would creep into *your* mind, and *you* are weary of these *Considerations* before they have done their work, see that *you* give not way to this lazines, or unwillingnes, but remember it is a *work* that *Must* be done, and therefore hold *your Thoughts* upon it, till *your hearts* are stirred, and warmed within *you*.

And if after all, *you* cannot awake them to *Seriousnes* and *Sensibility*, put two or three such wakening Questions as these to *your* selves.

1. *Quest.* What if it were but the case of my body or *state*, or *name*, should I not earnestly consider of it, If one do but *wrong* me, how easily can I think of it, and how tenderly do I feel it; and can scarce forget it? If my *good name* be blemished, and I be but disgraced, I can think of it night and day: If I lose but a *beast*, or have any *Crosse in the world*, or decay in my *Estate*, I can think of it with sensibility: If I loose a *child* or a *friend*, I can feel it as well as think on it. If my *health* be decayed, and my *Life* in danger, I am in good earnest in thinking of this. And should I not be as *serious*, in the Matters of *Everlasting life*! Should I not think of it, and soberly, and earnestly think on it, and soberly and *earnestly* think on it, when *body* and *Soul* do lie at the Stake

ſtake, and when if concerneth my *everlaſting Joy or Torment?*

2. *Queſt.* What it I had but heard the Son of God himſelf calling on me to *Repent*, and be Converted, and ſecond in his Commands with that earneſt expreſſion, (*He that hath an ear to hear let him hear*) would it not have brought me to ſome *ſerious Thoughts of my ſtate*? Why this he hath done in his Word, and doth it by his *Embaſſadors*, and why then ſhould I not conſider it?

3. *Queſt.* If I did but know that *death* were at my back, and ready to arreſt me, and that I ſhould be in another world before this day ſevennight, I ſhould then begin to bethink me in good ſadneſs: And why do I not ſo now, when I have no hold of my *life* an hour, and when I am ſure that ſhortly that time will come?

4. *Queſt.* If my eyes were but open to ſee that which I pretend to believe, and which is certainly true; even to ſee a *glimpſe* of the *Majeſty of the Lord*, to ſee the *Saints* in *Joy* and *Glory*, to ſee the *damned Souls in Miſery*; and if I heard their *lamentations*, would not this even force my heart to *Conſideration?* O then how earneſtly ſhould I think of theſe things? And why ſhould I not do ſo now, when they are as ſure as if I ſaw them, and when I muſt ſee them ere it be long?

Many more ſuch awakening Queſtions are at hand, but I give you but theſe brief touches on the things that are moſt common and obvious, that the moſt ignorant may be able to make ſome uſe of them. With ſuch thoughts as theſe, you muſt bring on *your backward hearts*, and ſhake them out of their *inſenſibility*, and awaken them to the work.

III When you have brought your *hearts* to be ſerious *be ſure that you drive on your Conſiderations to a Reſolution.* Break not off in the middle, or before *you* bring the the matter to an iſſue: But let all be done in order to Practice. When *you* have been Thinking of the excellencies of *God* and *the World to come*, and comparing them

them with all the Delights on Earth; put the Question then to your Hearts, and say, *What say'st thou now O my soul? which of these is the better for thee? which is the more desirable? and which of them shouldst thou prefer? Resolve then, and make thy Choice according to the Light, and Convictions which thou hast received.* When you are thinking of the Reasons that should move you to be *Converted*, ask your selves, *Whether these Reasons be not clear, and what you have to say against them? And whether any thing that can be said to the contrary; can prove it better for you to be as you are, and to remain unconverted?* Ask your selves, *Is my Judgment resolved, or is it not? And if it be (as sure it must be, if you be not besides your selves) then write it down under your hands, or at least in your hearts: I do here confess before the Lord, that his Commands are just, his Motions are reasonable, his Offers are exceeding merciful: I am satisfied that its best for me to turn to him speedily, and with all my heart? I confess before him, that I have no Reason to the contrary that deserves to be owned and called Reason: This is my own Judgment; of this I am convinced: If I turn not after this, the Light that is in me, and the Judgment that I now possess, must needs be a Witness against my Soul.* If you would but thus drive on the Case to a Resolution of your Judgments, you would have a great advantage for the resolving of *your Wills*, which is the next thing that you must proceed to. And therefore next ask your selves, *Why should I not now* resolve, *and* fixedly resolve, *to turn without any more delay? Is not the Case plain before me? What Reason have I to stand questioning the matter any longer, and to be unwilling to be happy? Shall I provoke God by dallying with him, and hazard my Soul by lingring out my time, in such a miserable State? No; by the Grace of God I will return; even this hour, without any more delay.* Thus drive on all your *Consideration* to *Resolution*. (But of this, I have more to say anon.)

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By this time you may see of what necessity this *Duty* of *Consideration* is, and how it must be performed, that it may further *your Conversion:* But because it is a matter of so *great Necessity*, I am loth to leave it thus, till I have done what I can to perswade you to the practice of it. To which end I intreat you to think of these following *Motives.*

1. *Consideration* is a Duty that you may perform if you will. You cannot say that it is wholly out of *your Power*; so that you are left unexcusable, if you will not be perswaded to it. You say, *you* cannot *convert your selves*: But cannot *you* set *your selves* to *consider* of *your ways*, and bethink *you* of those *Truths* that must be the Instruments of *your Conversion?* Your *Thoughts* are partly at the Command of your Will: You can turn them up and down from one thing to another. Even an unsanctified Minister that hath no saving relish of *Spiritual Things*, can think of them, and spend most of his time in thinking of them, that he may preach them to others: And why cannot you then turn *your Thoughts* to them for *your selves?* You cannot think of *House* and *Land*, and *Friends* and *Trading*, and of any thing that aileth *you*, or any thing that *you* want, or any thing that *you* love, or think would do *you good:* And why cannot *you* think of *your Sin*, and *danger of God*, and of *his Word*, and *Works*, of the *state* of *your Souls*, and of *Everlasting Life?* Are *you* not able to go sometimes by your selves, and consider of these Matters? Are you not able when *you* are alone in *your Beds*, or as *you travel* in the *Way*, or at *your Labour*, to bethink you how things stand with *your Souls?* Why are *you* not able? What is it that could hinder you, if you were but willing?

2. Yea further *Consideration* is so cheap a Remedy, that if *you* will not use this, *you despise your Souls*; yea, and *you despise the Lord himself*, and the *Everlasting Things* which *you* are called to consider of. A Man that is in danger of losing his *Estate*, or *Health*, or *Life*, and will not so much as *bethink* him of a *Reme-*

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ly, doth sure set light by them, and lose them by his Contempt. A Man that had but his *House on Fire*, and would not so much as *think* how to quench it, doth deserve that it should be burnt. If your *Parents* or *Children*, or *Friends*, were in distress, if *you* would not so much as *think* of them, it were a sign *you* did not set much by them. Why, Sirs, are not *your Souls* worth the *thinking on?* Is not *God*, is not *your Redeemer* worth the *thinking* on? And yet you will hypocritically pretend that you love *God* above all, when you will not so much as seriously *think* of him: How can you shew greater Contempt of any thing, than to cast it out of your Minds as unworthy to be thought on? And how can you more plainly shew that you *despise God*, and *Heaven*, then by such a Course as this? If it be not worth the Thinking on, its worth nothing.

3. Consider that God doth not set so light by your *Salvation*. He thought it worth a great deal more: Must *Christ* think it worth his *Bloody Sufferings*, and worth such a Life of *Labour* and *Sorrow*, and will you not judge it worth your *serious Consideration?* If he had not not *thought* on it, and *thought* again, how miserable should we have remained? *Ministers* also must *think* on it, and *study* how to save your *Souls*. And should you not *study* how to save your own? Must another Man make it the Business of his Life to *think* how to do *you good*, that *you* may be saved? And are you not as much bound to do good to your selves? Yea, all that fear God about you are bound to *study* to do you good; and should you not *bethink you* then of the things that concern *your own good?*

4. Moreover, what have *you your Reason* for, but to *consider*. And wherein do you differ from the *Beasts*, so much as in *your Reason?* If you have *Reason*, and will not use it, you brutifie *your selves*; *you* live like *Mad-men*: For what is Madness, but a loss of the Use of Reason? And do *you* think it a small thing to deface so Noble a *Creature* as *Man*, and to turn *your*

selves into *Beasts*, and *Mad-men?* Do you think that *God* will not call you to account for *your Reason*, how you have used it? Doubtless he gave it you for an higher Employment, than to enable you to *plough* and *sow*, and follow your *Trades*, and provide for *your Flesh*. If this were all that a Man did exceed a *Beast* in, what a silly wretched Wight were *Man?* Yea, so much more miserable than *Beasts*, as his *Knowledge* begets more Care, and Sorrow, and Fear than theirs. What matter is it for *having Reason* at all, if it be not that we may use it for the Matters of God, and Eternal Life?

5. Moreover, *your Soul* is an *active Principle*, which will be working one way or other: Your *Thoughts* will be going on one thing or other; and therefore the bare Consideration is no great labour to you. And if *you must* lay out *your* Thoughts on some thing, is it not better lay them out on *these* things, then on any other? Have you any better Matters to think on than these? Have you any *Greater Matters?* Or Matters of greater *Necessity* to think of? You cannot sure imagine it; at least you will not say so for shame. This makes your *Inconsiderateness* an unexcusable Sin. If *Thinking* were a Toil to *you*, it were another matter. But when *you* must think of *something*, why not of *God*, and your *Eternal State*, and the way to *Heaven*, as well as of other Matters? Will *you* rather throw away *your Thoughts* than *God* shall have them? If a Man command his Servant that is lame, to go on his Business, the Refuser hath a good Excuse: *I cannot go, or not without great pain and danger.* But if he have a Son, or a Servant that is so wanton, that he cannot stand on his Legs, but spends his time in running up and down and dancing, and leaping, this Person hath no Excuse, if he will refuse to go on his Master's, or his Father's Errand; but will gad about on his pleasure all Day, and will not go a few steps when he is bidden; especially if it were for his own Life, or Welfare. So when *you* have *Thoughts* that *will not* be

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ept idle, but will be gadding abroad through the World, and *yet you* will not think of *God*, and the Matters of *your Peace*, what wilfulness is this? If you hould ask one that hath it not, for Meat or Drink, or Money, they might well deny you. But if you ask hese of one that hath abundance, and knows not what o do with them, but would throw them down the Channel rather than you should have them, what would ou think of such a one? Especially if it were *your* Servant or your Child that owed you much more? Thus do you by *God*, and *your own Souls*. You have *Thoughts* enough and to spare, you know not what to lo with them; and yet rather than *you* will spend one *Hour* in a *Day* or a *Week*, in *serious Thoughts* of the *State of your Souls*, and the *Life to come*, you will cast them away upon News and Tales, and other Folks Business that do not concern *you*; yea, *you* will cast them down the *Sink of Covetousness*, and *Malice*, and *Lust*, and *Wantonness*, and make them Servants to the *Devil* and the *Flesh*. If *you* have a Brook running by *your* Land, *you* will endeavour to turn it over *your Ground*, that seeing it *must* run, it may as well run that way where it may do good, as run in vain. So when *your Thoughts* must run, is it not better that *you* turn them to your own *Hearts* and *States*, to prepare for the *World* that *you* are ready to step into, then to let them run in vain? If *you* see a Man go into a Wine-Seller, (tho' it be his own) and pull out all the Spiggots, and let all the Wine run about the Celler, and suffer No-body to catch it, or be the better for it, what would you conceive of the Wisdom and Charity of that Man? Your *Thoughts* are a thing more precious than Wine, and such a thing as should not be spilt. And yet is not this your Every-day's Practice? You are before him that knows your *Thoughts*: Deny it if *you* can. What Hour of the Day can a Man come to *you*, and find your *Thoughts* altogether idle? What Minute of an Hour can a Man come and ask you, *What are you now thinking on?* And you can truly say,

Nothing: I know as long as you are awake, you are alway thinking of somewhat, (and perhaps when you are asleep) And what is it on? *This* Body shall have a *Thought*; and *that* Body a *Thought*; every Word you hear, and every Wrong that's done you, and almost every thing you look upon, shall have a *thought:* And God and your own *Salvation* shall have none; that is, you will lose them, and let them run in waste; but *you* will do no good with them, nor take in any profit by them to your selves.

6. Have you any thing that better deserves your *Consideration*, than *God* and your *Salvation?* Certainly *God* hath more right to your *Thoughts* than any thing else that you can place them on. Your *Flesh*, *your Friends*, *your Worldly Business*, are neither so honourable, so necessary, or so profitable Subjects, as *God* and *Heaven* are. As there is more profit to be got by the Tillage of fruitful Land, than barren Heath; or by digging in a Mine of Gold, than in a Clay-pit: So is there more pleasure and profit to be gotten in one Hour's serious *Thoughts* of *your Salvation*, than in *thinking* all *your Life-time* of the *World*.

7. At least methinks *you* should consider, how disproportionably and unequally *you lay* out *your Thoughts*. Cannot *you* spare *God the Tenths?* No, nor the *Hundreth-part* of them? Look back upon *your Lives*, and trace *your Thoughts* from *day* to *day*, and tell me how many Hours in a Week, in a Month, in a Year, you have spent in serious *Thoughts* of the *State of your Souls*, and of the *Life to come?* Is it one Hour of an hundred, of a thousand, of ten thousand, with some of *you*, that is thus spent? Nay, I have very great cause to fear, that there are some, yea, that there are many, yea, that there's far the greatest number, that never spent one Hour since they were born, in withdrawing themselves purposely from all other Business, and soberly, and in good sadness, bethinking themselves what Case *they* are in, what Evidence *they* have of their *Title* to *Salvation*, or how *they* must be *justified* at the

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bour of God: no nor what business they have in the world, and to what end they were made, and how they have done the work that they were made for. Ah Sirs, doth *Conscience* justifie you in this? Or rather will it not *torment you* one day to remember it? What? did thy *Land*, and *Livings*, worldly matters deserve *all* thy *Thoughts*, and did not the *saving of the Soul* deserve some of them? Did thy *lusts* and *sports*, and *wantonness* deserve all; and did not God deserve some of them? Was it not worth now and then an hours time, no nor one hours study in all thy life to bethink thee in good sadness how to make sure of a *life of endless Joy and Glory*, and how to scape the *flames of Hell*? This is not an equal distribution of thy *Thoughts*, as thou wilt confess at last in the horror of thy *Soul*.

8. It is the end of your present time and warnings, that *you* may consider, and prepare for *your everlasting state*. What have *you* to do on earth but to consider how to get well to *Heaven*? O that you did but know what a *mercy* it is before *you* enter upon an *endless life*, to have but time to bethink *you* of it, and to make *your Election sure*! If you were to be called away suddenly this night, and the *Angel* of the *Lord* should say to any of *you*, *Prepare*; *for within his hour thou must die, and appear before the living God.* Then would *you* not cry out, *O not so suddenly Lord! Let me have a little more time to consider of my Condition: Let me have one month longer, to bethink me of the case of my Soul, and to make sure that I am Justified from the guilt of my sins*; *Let me have one day more at least to prepare for my Everlasting state*; *for alas, I am yet unready.* Would not these be your *cries*, if God should call you presently away? And yet now you have time, you will not *Consider* of these matters and prepare.

9. Moreover, is it not time for *you* to *Consider* your *ways*, when *God* doth *Consider* them? if *he* would *forget* them, or did not *regard* them you might *regard* them, the less *your selves*. But be *sure* of it, he *doth observe them, whether you do*

or not, and he remembreth them though *you* forget them. Doſt thou not know that all the *ſins* of thy *life* are ſtill on record before the *Lord*? *Job* 14. 16,17. *thou numbereſt my ſteps; doſt thou not watch over my ſin! My tranſgreſſion is ſealed up in a bag, and thou ſoweſt up mine iniquity.* Do you think that God forgets *your ſins*, as you forget them? ſaith the Lord by the Prophet *Hoſea*, 7. 2. *They Conſider not in their heats, that I remember all their wickedneſs; Now their doings have beſet them about, they are before my face*: But, you'l ſay, What if God do Conſider our ways? why ſurely then it is not for nothing, but evil is near if not prevented. As the Lord ſaith in *Deut.* 32.34,35. *Is not this laid up in ſtore with me, and ſeal'd up among my Treaſures? To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence, their foot ſhall ſlide in due time. For the day of their calamity is at hand; and the things that ſhall come upon them make haſte.* If God be regiſtring up thy *ſins*, thou haſt cauſe to tremble, to think what that portends: For in this *hardneſs and impenitency of thy heart, thou art treaſuring up wrath, againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgments of God*, Rom. 2. 5. As Grace is the ſeed of *Glory*, ſo *ſin* is the ſeed of *ſhame*, and *trouble*, and *everlaſting Torment*: and though it may ſeem long before the Harveſt, you will taſt the bitter fruit at laſt; and whatſoever you have ſowed, that ſhall you reap.

10. Moreover; if any thing ail'd you, you look that God ſhould preſently *Conſider you*: Or if *you* want any thing, you think he ſhould *Conſider your wants*: And yet will you not *Conſider* of him, and of your one *wants*? When you are in trouble, you'l cry to *God; Have Mercy upon me, O Lord, Conſider my Trouble*, Pſal. 9. 33. *Conſider and hear me O God*, Mat. 13. 3. When you lie in *pain* and *ſickneſs*, you'l then cry to *God, Conſider mine affliction, and deliver me*, Pſal. 119. 153. If you be *oppreſſed* or *abuſed*, you'l groan as the *Iſraelites* under their *Task maſters*, and perhaps cry to *God*, as the captived people, *Lam.* 1. 11. *See*

O *Lord, and Consider*; *for I am become vile*; *Remember O Lord, what is come upon us*, ; *Consider and behold our reproach*: ch. 5. 1. & 2. 20. And must God *Consider of you* that will not *Consider* of *him*, or your own *Souls*, Or may you not rather expect that dreadful answer, which he gives to such *regardless sinners*, *Prov.* 1. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. And hear *your cries*, as *you* hear his *Counsel*, and think of you, as you thought of him.

Nay more then so; even while *you forget* him, the Lord doth daily Consider *you*, and supply *your wants*, and save *you* from *dangers*; and should you then cast him out of your *Thought*? If he did not *think* on *you*, you would quickly feel it to your *cost* and *sorrow*.

11. Moreover the Nature of the Matter is such, as one would think, should force a reasonable creature to consider of it, and often and earnestly to consider. When all these things concur in the matter, he must be a block or a mad man that will not Consider. 1. When they are the most *excellent*, or the *greatest* things in all the world. 2. When they are our *own* matters, or neerly concern us. 3. When they are the most *necessary*, and *profitable*, and *delightful things*. And 4. When there is much difficulty in *getting them*, and *danger* of *loosing them*; And all these go together in the matter of your *Salvation*.

1. If you will not think of God, and *your Souls*, of *Heaven*, and *Hell*, what then will you think of? All other things in the world are but toys, and jesting matters to these. *Crowns* and *Kingdoms*, *Lands*, and *Lordships*, are but chaff, and bawbles, dirt and dung, to these *Everlasting things*. The acts of renowned *Kings* and *Conquerors*, are but as Popet-plaies in Comparison of the working out of *your Salvation*. And yet will *you* not be drawn to the *Consideration* of such *astonishing things* as these? One would think that the exceeding Greatness of the matter should force *you* to Consider it whether *you* will or no: when smaller Objects affects not the Senses, yet Greater will even

force their way. He that hath so hard a skin that he cannot feel a feather, methinks should feel the weight of a mil-stone; And if he feel not the prick of a pin, methinks he should feel a dagger. He that cannot hear one whisper, methinks should hear a Cannon, or a clap of Thunder, if he have any such thing as hearing left him. He hath bad eyes that cannot see the Sun. One would think that so *Glorious* an *Object as God*, should so entice the *eyes* of men, that they should not look off him. One would think that such matters as *Heaven* and *Hell* should follow thy thoughts which way ever thou goest, so that thou shouldest not be able to look besides them, or to think almost of any thing else, unless with great neglect and disesteem. O what a thing is a *stony heart*, that can forget not only the *God* that he *liveth by*, but also the place where he must *live for ever*? Yea that will not be perswaded to the *Sober Consideration* of it for one hour.

2. And as these are the greatest matters, so they are your *own* matters, and therefore one would think you should not need so much ado to bring you to *Consider* them. If it were only *other mens* matters, I should not wonder at it. But *self-love* should make you regard your *Own*. In outward matters, all seek their *Own* things, *Phil.* 2. 21. And have they not more Reason to seek their *Own Salvation*? It is your *Own Souls*, your *Own danger*, your *Own sin*, your *Own duty*, that I perswade you to Consider of. It is that *God*, that *Christ*, that would be your *Own*: it is that *Heaven*, that *blessedness* that may be your *Own*, if you lose it not by neglect: It is that *Hell* and torment, that will certainly be your own if you prevent it not. And should not these be thought on? You will think of your *Own goods*, *lands*, or *riches*; of your *Own* families, your *Own business*, your *Own lives*, and why not also of your *Own Salvation*.?

3. Especially, when it is not only your *Own*, but it is the *One thing needfull. Luke* 10. 42. It is that which your *life* or *death*, *your Everlasting Joy* or *Torment*

Torment lieth on : and therefore *must* be Considered of, or you are utterly undone for ever. Necessity lyeth upon you ; and woe be to you, if you Consider not of these things. It is not so necessary that you *eat* or *drink*, or *sleep*, or *live*, as it is Necessary that you make sure *your Everlasting life*. And the Profit also doth answer the necessity. Buy but this own Pearl, and you will be infinite gainers, though you sell all that you have in the world to *buy* it, *Matth.* 13. 44, 45, 46. Get God, and get all : make sure of *Heaven*, and then fear no *loss*, nor *want*, nor *sorrow*. If you count not all the world as dung, for the winning of *Christ*, that you may be found in him, possessed of his *righteousness*, it is because *you* know neither the *world*, nor *Christ*, *Phil.* 3. 7, 8, 9. Yea the Delight also will answer the Commodity : *For in the presence of God is fulness of Joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore*, Psal. 16. 11. And the fore-thoughts of them may well make *glad our hearts, and cause our Glory to rejoyce*, Psal. 16. 8, 9. *For Goodness and Mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we shall dwell in the House of the Lord for ever*, Psal. 23. 6. *He shall guide with his Counsel, and afterward receive us into Glory*, Psal. 73. 24. And lest yet you should suspect any lack of Comfort, he tells you, you shall *enter into the Joy of your Lord*, Matth. 25. 23. *And that you shall be with him where he is, to behold his Glory*, Joh. 17. 24.

4. And yet if all this might be had with a wet finger. If *Heaven* were the portions of *worldling*, and *sluggards*, that trouble not their Thoughts much about it, then you might have some excuse for your *Inconsiderateness*. But it is not so : there are *difficulties* in *your* way ; and there are many and great : what a dark understanding have *you* to inform : what a dull and backward nature to spur on ? What an unreasonable appetite ? What raging passions ? What violent rebellious senses to contend with, to Master and to rule ? Abundance of adversaries on every hand : A

subtil Devil, and as malicious as subtil, and as furious and able to do *you* a mischief, if *God* restrain him not. A world of wicked men about you: each one more stiff in Errour, then *you* in the *Truth*; and more fast to the *Devil* then you are to *God*, (if his grace do not hold *you* faster then *you* will hold *your* selves:) and therefore they are able to deceive *you*, then *you* are to undeceive them: many of them are *crafty*, and can puzzel such Ignorant beginners as *you*, and can put a face of *reverence* and *truth* upon *damnable Errors*, and pernicious ways: and those that have not wit, have foolish violence, and scorn and passion, and can *drive you* towards *Hell*, if they cannot draw *you*. All these enemies *you* must *Conquer*, or *you* are lost. And is it not time for a man in so much danger to *Consider* of them, that he may know how to escape? And for one that is compassed about with such *difficulties*, to *consider* how he may well get through them. What abundance of things have you to *Consider* of? of all *your* life past; of the *Relations you* have born, and how *you* have performed the duties of those *Relations*? Of the time *you* have *had*; and how *you* have *spent* it? Of the *means you have had*, and what *you* have received by them of the present state of your *Souls*, *your* sins, *your* miseries, *your* hopes, and the *duties* that are incumbent on *you*, in order to *your* recovery. Of the *temptations* to be encountred with: and the *graces* that are daily to be exercised and confirmed, should not a man bethink himself with all possible care, and *Consider*, and an hundred times *Consider*, that hath all this to do, or be undone for ever? You have much to know that will not easily be known, and yet must be known, and much to do, receive, and suffer, that hath difficulty joyned with Necessity: were it Necessary, and not hard, the facility might draw you to make light of it. And were it hard, and not *Necessary*, the *difficulty* might more *discourage* you then the matter would excite you: but when it *must be done, or you must be shut out of Heaven and lie in Hell* for it *world without end.*

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and yet there are so many *difficulties* in the way, I think its time to look about you, and seriously to Consider.

12. To conclude; *Consideration* would prevent a world of *misery*, which else will make you Consider when it is too late. It must be a principal means of *your Salvation* if ever *you* be *saved*. If *God* have so much *Mercy* for *you* he will *make you Consider*; and set *your* sins in order before *you*, *Psal.* 50. 21. And set *Hell-fire* before *your* face, and hold *your Thoughts* on it, that *you* cannot look off. He will set before *you* a *Crucified Christ*, and tell *you*, that this *your sins* have done, and make you think of the *Reason* of his *sufferings*, and what there is in sin that could require it; and what it is to rebel against the Lord, and run *your* selves into the *consuming fire*. Now *your* thoughts are gadding abroad the world, and straggling after every trifle, and going away from *God*: but if ever *God* will save *you*, he will overtake *your* hearts, and fetch them home, and shew them that they have somewhat else to think on. If Commands will not serve, he will send our his *threatnings*, and *terrors* shall come upon *you*, and pursue *your Soul* as the wind, *Job.* 33. 15. *He'l* fetch *you* out of the *Ale-House*, and the *Gaming-House*, and take *you* off the merry pin, and lay that upon *your heart*, that *you* shall not easily shake off. If you are taken up with the cares of the world, he'l shew *you* that *you* have somewhat else to care for, and drown those cares in greater cares. If *you* have such giddy, unsettled, vagrant *minds*, that *you* cannot call in *your Thoughts* to *God*, nor hold them with him; he will lay those clogs and bolts upon them at first, that shall restrain them from their idle vagaries: and then he will set upon them such byass, as shall better order them, and fix them for the time to come. Men do not use to go to *Heaven*, and never think of it: And to escape *Hell-fire*, and the plague of sin, and the *curse* of the *Law*, and the *Wrath* of *God*, and the *rage* of *Satan*, and never think on it: nor do they use to mind other matters, and find themselves in *Heaven*, before they ever dream

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of it. No Sirs, if ever God will *save you*, he will make you *consider*, and *again consider*, and *perhaps with many a sigh* and *groan*; and bring these things so near your Hearts, that you shall not only think on them, but feel them; according to that Command, *Deut.* 6. 6, 7. & 11. 18, 19, 20. They shall be as written before your eyes; you shall think of them when you lie down, and when you rise up, as if they were written upon the Texture of your Beds: You shall think of them when you sit at home, when you go *abroad*, as carrying them still with you, which way soever you go. As before God was not in all your *Thoughts*, so now he will be the Sum and End of them all.

And if by your Resistance you scape these Considerations, believe it, God will bring you to *Consideration* by a severer and more dreadful way. If he do but give your *Conscience* a *Commission*, it will follow you, and bring you to such a Consideration as *Judas* was brought to. If he lay you under his *Judgments*, and speak to you by his *Rod*, and give you a Lash with every Word, and ask you, Whether *yet* you will *consider* of it: It may bring such things to your Thoughts, as you were little troubled with before. If he say but the word, how soon will *your Soul* be required of you? And when you lie in *Hell*, and feel the smart, you will then *consider* of it. Now we cannot beg of you to bestow one Hour in sober Consideration; but then you shall do it without intreaty; then you will be as a Man that hath the Stone, or Gout, or Tooth-ache, that cannot forget it, if he would never so fain. Forget your Folly, your Obstinacy, and Unthankfulness; then, if you can. Forget *God's Wrath*, and the Torment which you feel, then if you can. Now you were so busie, that you could not have while to think of the Matters of the *World to come*; but then *God* will give you leisure; you shall have little else to do; you shall have time enough; when you have thought of these things *ten thousand Years*, you shall still have time enough before

fore you, to think of them again. You will not consider now, but when *God hath performed the intents of his heart*, in the *latter days you shall perfectly consider*, Jer. 23. 20. & 30. 24. *O that you were wise, that you understood this; that you would consider your latter end*, Deut. 32. 29.

What brings so many thousand Souls to Hell, but because they would not consider in time? If you could speak with any of those hopeless Souls, and ask them, How came you to this place of torment? they would tell you; *Because we did not consider of our Case in time: We little thought of this Day, tho' we were told of it; we had a Load of Sin upon us, and did not consider how we might be relieved: We had Christ and Mercy set before us, but we did not consider the worth of them, nor how to be made Partakers of them: We had time, but we considered not how to make the best of it. We had the Work of our Salvation lay upon our hands; but we did not consider how we might accomplish it: O had we but considered what now we feel, we might have escaped all this, and have lived with God!* These would be the Answers of those miserable Souls, if you could but ask them the Cause of their *Misery*. There is scarce a Thief or Murderer hanged at the Gallows, but will cry out, *O if I had but had the Wit and Grace to have considered this in time, I need not have come to this!* There's scarce an Unthrift that falls into *Beggery*, no nor a Man that comes to *any Mischance*, but will say, *If I had considered it before-hand, I might have prevented it*. Most of the Calamities of the World might have been prevented, by timely and sober *Consideration*. God himself doth place Mens Wickedness much in their *Inconsiderateness*, and lays the Cause of their Destruction upon it. Whence it is that *Israel* was rebellious to astonishment, *Isai.* 1. 3. *Why, Israel doth not know, my People doth not consider.* Job 34. 25, 26, 27. *He shall break in pieces mighty Men without number, and set others in their stead: Therefore he knoweth their Works, and he overturneth them in the Night,*

Night, so that they are destroyed. He striketh them as wicked Men in the open sight of others, because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways. Why do Men live so wilfully in Sin, but because *they consider not that they do evil?* Eccles. 5. 1. How many such hath the World that God pronounceth a Woe to? *Isa.* 5. 11, 12. that drink, and play, and give themselves to their Merriments; *but they regard not the Work of the Lord; neither consider the Operations of his hands. They consider not in their heart the folly of their ways,* Isai. 44. 18, 19, 20. When they see God's Judgments, they consider not the meaning of them, and therefore lay them not to heart, *Isa.* 57. 1, 2.

And when God calleth Men to *Conversion*, or *Reformation*, he useth to call them to *Consideration* as the way to it. *Hag.* 1. 5. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways.* The Son that shall escape the Misery of his Fathers, is he that *considereth, and turneth away from his Transgressions, and considereth, and doth not his Fore-fathers Work,* Ezek. 18. 14, 20. And when he sendeth the Prophet to them, *Ezek.* 12. 3. it is but with this encouragement; *Tho' they are a rebellious House, it may be they will consider.* And *David* professeth, that *Consideration* was the beginning of his Conversion, *Psal.* 119. 59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy Statutes.*

I know that it is the *Lord*, that must renew and revive a *sinful Soul*: But yet under God, *Consideration* must do much. O could we but perswade our People to *consider*, it is not sure possible that they could be as they are, or do as they do. Would so many thousands live in ease and quietness, under the guilt of so many Sins, and the Wrath of God, if they did but well consider of it? Durst they live so peaceably in a State of *Death*, and in the Slavery of the *Devil*, if they did but well consider of it? Would they do no more to prepare for their speedy appear-

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ng before God, and for the scaping of *Hell-fire*, if they did but consider of it? Would they swallow down their Cups so greedily, and give up themselves to the World so eagerly, if they did but well consider what they do? Methinks they should not. The Cause of Sin and the Devil is so naught, that I should hope to shame it with the most of the Ungodly, if I could but bring them to a serious Consideration of it. O how the Kingdom of Satan would down, if we could but tell how to make them considerate! How fast the Devil would lose his Servants! What abundance *Christ* would *gain!* And how many would be *saved*, if we could but tell how to make Men *considerate!* And one would think that this should be easily done, seeing man is a Self-loving, and reasonable Creature: But yet to our grief, and great admiration, we cannot bring them to it. I should not doubt, but one *Sermon*, or one *Sentence* of a *Sermon*, might do more good than a hundred do now; if I were but able to perswade the Hearers, when they come home, to follow it by serious Consideration. But we cannot bring them to it: if our Lives lay on it, we could not bring them to it: Tho' we know that their own *Lives* and *Salvation* lieth on it, yet can we not bring them to it. They think, and talk of other Matters, almost as soon as the Sermon's done: And they turn loose their Thoughts; or if they do *read*, or *hear*, or *repeat* a little; yet cannot we get them to one half hour's secret, and sober Consideration of their Case. This is the Reason why it is so rare a thing to see Men throughly turn to God. This is much of the use of all *God's Teachings*, and *Afflictions* too, but to bring Men to sober Consideration. God knows that Sin hath unmanned us, and lost us the use of our *Reason*, where we have most use for it: And therefore the Means, and Works of God, are to recover us to our *Reason*, and to make us Men again. The very Graces of his Spirit, are to make us to be more reasonable.

And

And now before I dismiss this Direction, I have a *Question*, and a *Request*, to make to thee, whoever thou art, that readest these Lines. My *Question* is this: *Hast thou ever soberly considered of thy Ways, and laid these greatest Matters to Heart, or hast thou not?* Dost thou ever use to retire into thy self, and spend any time in this *needful Work?* If thou dost not, my *Request* to thee is, that now at last thou wouldest do it without delay. Shall I beg this of thee? Shall the Lord that made thee, that bought thee, that preserveth thee, request this of thee; that thou wouldest sometimes betake thy self into some secret place, and set thy self purposely to this Work of Consideration, and follow it earnestly, and close with thy Heart, till thou hast made something of it, and brought it to a Resolution? Wilt thou then spend a little time, in reasoning the Case with thy self, and calling thy Heart to a strict account, and ask thy self, *What is it that I was made for? And what business was I sent into the World about? And how have I dispatch'd it? How have I spent my Time, my Thoughts, my Words; and how shall I answer for them? Am I ready to die, if it were this hour? Am I sure of my Salvation? Is my Soul converted, and truly sanctified by the Holy Ghost? If not, what Reason have I to delay? Why do I not set about it, and speedily resolve? Shall I linger till Death come and find me unconverted? O then what a sad appearance shall I make before the Lord?* And thus follow on the Discourse with your Hearts? What say you? Sirs, Will you here promise me to bestow but some few Hours, if it be but on the *Lord's Day*, or when you are private on the *Way*, or in your *Beds*, or in your *Shops*, in these *Considerations?* I beseech you, as ever you will do any thing at my Request, deny me not this Request. It is nothing that is unreasonable. If I desired one of you to spend an Hour in *talking* with me, you would grant it; yea, or if it were to ride, or go for me: And will you not be intreated to spend now and then a little time in *Thinking* of the Matters

of

of your own *Salvation?* Deny not this much to *your selves*, deny it not to God, if you will deny it me. Should you not bethink you a few Hours, of the Place, and State that you must live in for ever? Men will build strong, where they think to live long: But a Tent, or a Hut, will serve a Soldier for a few Nights. O, Sirs, *Everlasting* is a long Day. In the Name of *God* let not *Conscience* have such a Charge as this against you hereafter: *Thou art come to thy Long Home, to thy Endless State, before ever thou spentest the space of an Hour, in deep and sad, and serious Considerations of it, or in trying thy Title to it.* O what a confounding Charge would this be? I am confident I have the Witness of your *Consciences* going along with me, and telling you, it is but *reasonable*; yea, and *needful*, which I say. If yet you will not do it, and I cannot beg one Hour's sober Discourse in secret, between you and your Hearts, about these things, then what Remedy, but even to leave you to your Misery. But I shall tell you in the Conclusion, that I have no hope of that Soul, that will not be perswaded to this Duty of Consideration: But if I could perswade you to this reasonable, this cheap, this necessary Work, and to follow it close, I should have exceeding great hopes of the *Salvation* of you all. I have told the Truth: *Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding*, 2 Tim. 2. 7. Or if you put me to conclude in harsher Terms, they shall be still the *Oracles of God. Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you*, Psalm 50. 22.

And so much for the third Direction, about *Consideration*; on which I have staid somewhat long, because I apprehend it of exceeding necessity.

Direct. IV. The Fourth *Direction* which I shall give you, that the Work of your *Conversion* may not miscarry, is this: *See that the Work of Humiliation be throughly done, and break not away from the Spirit of Con-*

Contrition, before he have done with you: And yet see that you mistake not the Nature, and the Ends of the Work, and that you drive it not on further than God requireth you.

Here I shall 1. Shew you the true Nature of Humiliation. And, 2. The Use and Ends of it. And, 3. The Mistakes about it, that you must avoid. And, 4. I shall press on the *Substance* of the *Direction*, and shew you the *Necessity* of it.

1. There is a *Preparatory Humiliation* that goes before a *saving Change*, which yet is not to be despised, because it is a drawing somewhat nearer unto God, tho' it be not a faithful Closure with him. This *Preparatory Humiliation*, which many have that perish, doth chiefly consist in these things following: 1. It lieth most in the Fear of being damned: As it is most in the *Passions*, so most in this of Fear. 2. It consisteth also in some apprehension of the Greatness of our Sins, and the Wrath of God, that hangs over our Heads, and the Danger that we are in of being *damned* for ever. 3. It consisteth also in some *Apprehensions* of the *Folly*, that we are guilty of in sinning, and of some *Repentings* that ever we did it, and some *Remorse* of *Conscience* for it. 4. Hereto may be joyned some Passions of *Sorrow*, and this expressed by *Groans* and *Tears*. 5. And all this may be accompanied with *Confessions* of Sin to *God* and *Man*, and *Lamentations* for our Misery, and in some measure it proceedeth to desperation it self. 6. And Lastly, It may proceed to an Indignation against our selves, and to the taking a severe Revenge on our selves; yea, more then God would have Men take; as *Judas* did by Self-destroying. This Desperation and Self-execution, are no parts of the *Preparatory Humiliation*; but the Excess and Error of it, and the Entrance upon Hell.

2. But there is also a Humiliation that is proper to the Converted, and which accompanieth Salvation; and this containeth in it, all that is in the former, and

and much more: Even as the *Rational Soul* containeth the Sensitive, and Vegetative, and much more. And this Saving Humiliation consisteth in these following Particulars.

1. It beginneth in the *Understanding*, 2. It is rooted in the *Will*. 3. It worketh in the *Affections*. And, 4. When there is Opportunity, it sheweth it self in outward Expressions and Actions.

1. *Humiliation* in the *Understanding*, consisteth in a low Esteem of our Selves, and in a *Self-abasing*, *Self-condemning Judgment* on our selves; and that in these Particulars.

1. It consisteth in a deep and solid Apprehension of the Odiousness of our own *Sins*, habitual and actual, and of our selves for our *Sins*: And that because they are contrary to the blessed Nature and Law of God, and so contrary to our own Perfection, and chief Good. 2. It consisteth also in a solid and fixed Apprehension of our own *Ill-deserving*, because of these Sins: So that our Judgments do subscribe to the Equity of the condemning Sentence of the Law; and we judge our selves unworthy of the smallest Mercy, and worthy of Hell-fire. 3. It consisteth in an apprehension of our *undone*, and *miserable Condition* in our selves: Not only as we are the Heirs of Torment, but as we are void of the Image and Spirit of God, and have lost his Favour, and are under his Displeasure and Enmity by our Sin, and have forfeited our part in *Everlasting Glory*, and how unable we are to help our selves.

And, 1. This is in such a measure, that we truly judge our *Sin*, and our selves for *Sin*, to be more odious than any thing else could have made us, and our Misery by *Sin* in the foresaid Particulars, to be greater than any outward Calamity in the Flesh, and than any worldly Loss could have procured us. And this we apprehend by a *Practical Judgment*, and not only by a bare uneffectual Speculation. 2. And the Spring of this is some Knowledge of God himself, whose Majesty,

Majesty is so *glorious*, and whose *Wisdom* is so *infinite*; who is so *good* in himself, and unto us, and whose *Holy Nature* is contrary to *Sin*; and who hath an absolute *Propriety* in us, and *Sovereignty* over us. 3. And also it proceedeth from a Knowledge of the true State of Man's Felicity, which by Sin he hath cast away, that it consisteth in the *pleasing*, and *glorifying*, and *enjoying of God*, in *loving*, and *delighting* in him, and praising him for ever, and having a Nature *perfectly holy*, and fitted hereunto. To see that *Sin* is contrary to this Felicity, and hath deprived us of it, is one of the Springs of true *Humiliation*. And, 4. It proceedeth also from a *Believing Knowledge* of Christ *crucified*, whom our *Sins* did put to death, who hath declared in the most lively manner to the World by his Cross, and Sufferings, what Sin is, and what it hath done, and what a Case we had brought our selves into. Thus much of saving Humiliation, consisteth in the Understanding.

2. The principal Seat of this *Humiliation* is in the Will, and there it consisteth in these following Acts: 1. As we think basely of our selves, so the *Will* hath a fixed *Displacency* against our selves for our *Sins*, and a kind of *loathing of our selves* for all our *Abominations*; as you may read, *Ezek.* 36. 31. & 20. 43. & 6. 9. An *humble Sinner* is fallen out with himself, and as he is *evil*, his *Heart* is against himself.

2. There is also in the *Will* a *deep repenting* that ever we sinned, and *wronged God*, and abused *Grace*, and have brought our selves to this as we have done; so that the *humbled Soul* could wish that he had spent his *Days* in *Prison*, in *Beggery*, or in *Bodily Misery*, so that he had not spent them in *Sin*; and if it were to do again, he would rather choose such a Life of Shame and Calamity in the World, than a Life of *Sin*, and would be glad of the exchange.

3. An *humbled Soul* is truly willing to grieve for the Sins which he hath committed, and to be as deeply sensible of them, and afflicted for them, as God would have

ave him. Even when he cannot shed a Tear, yet is Will is to shed them. When he cannot feel any eep afflicting of his Soul for Sin, his hearty Desire s, that he might feel it. He doth an hundred times veep in Desire, when he doth it not in Act.

4. An humbled Soul is truly willing to humble the Flesh it self, by the use of those appointed means by which God would have him bring it in Subjection; s by Fasting, or Abstinence, or mean Attire, hard abour, and denying it unnecessary Delights. Its a Doubt worth the considering, whether any such humbling Act must be used, purposely in *Revenge* on our elves for sin. To which I answer, That we may do nothing in such *Revenge* that God doth not allow, or hat makes our Body less fit for his Service, for that were to be revenged of God, and our Souls; but those humbling Means which are needful to tame the Body, may well be used with this double intention; first and chiefly as a Means for our Safety, and Duty, for the time to come; that the Flesh may not prevail, and then *collaterally* we should be the more content hat the Flesh is put to so much suffering, because it hath been, and still is so great an *Enemy to God*, and us, and the Cause of all our *Sin* and *Misery*; and this s the *Revenge* that is warrantable in the Penitent, and some think is meant, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11.

5. As the *humbled Soul* hath base Thoughts of himself, so he is willing that others should esteem and think of him accordingly, even as a vile, unworthy *Sinner*; so far as his Disgrace may be no wrong to the *Gospel*, or to others, or dishonour to *God*. His Pride is so far taken down, that he cannot endure to be vilified with some Consent; not approving of the Sin of any Man that doth it maliciously, but consenting to the Judgment and Rebukes of those that do it truly, and to the Judgment of God, even by them that do it maliciously. The *humbled Soul* doth not stand defending, and unjustly extenuating his Sin, and

and excuſing himſelf, and ſwelling againſt the Reprover: Whatever he may do in a Temptation, if this Temper were predominant, his *Pride*, and not *Humility*, muſt be predominant. But he judgeth himſelf as much as others can juſtly judge him, and humbly conſenteth to be baſe in Mens Eyes, till God ſhall think it meet to raiſe him, and recover his Eſteem.

And the Root of all this in the Will, is, 1. A *Love to God* whom we have offended. 2. A hatred of Sin that hath *offended him*, and that hath made us vile. And 3. A believing ſence of the Love and Sufferings of Chriſt, that in his Fleſh hath condemned Sin, (*Rom.* 8. 2, 3.) And thus you ſee what *Humiliation* is in the *Will*, which is the very Life and Soul of *true Humiliation.*

3. *Humiliation* alſo conſiſteth in the *Affections:* In an unfeigned Sorrow for the Sin which we have committed, and the Corruption that is in us; and a ſhame for theſe Sins; and an holy fear of God whom we have offended, and of his Judgments which we have deſerved; and an hatred of our Sins by which we have deſerved them. But (as I muſt further ſhew you anon) it is not the meaſure, but the ſincerity of theſe Paſſions, by which you muſt make a Judgment of your State; and that will be hardly diſcerned by the Paſſions themſelves, but only by ſo much of the Will as is in them; and therefore the Will is the ſafeſt to judge by.

4. *Humiliation* alſo conſiſteth expreſſively in the outward Action, when Opportunity is offered: And it is not true in the Heart, if it refuſe to appear without, when God requireth it in your ordinary Courſe. The outward Acts of *Humiliation* are theſe: 1. A voluntary Confeſſion of Sin to God, and to Men, when God requireth it; and that is, when it is neceſſary to his Honour, to the healing of them that we have endangered, and ſatisfying the offended; at leaſt in the hearing of Men, in ſuch Caſes as theſe to confeſs them

them openly to God; an unhumbled Soul will refuse this for the shame; but the Humble will freely take shame to themselves, and warn their Brethren, and justifie God, and give him the Glory, 1 *John* 1. 9. *If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us.* Read *Mark* 3. 6. *Levit.* 5. 5. & 16. 21. & 26. 40. *Numb.* 5. 6, 7. *James* 5. 16. *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.* Prov. 28. 13. *He that hideth his Sins shall not prosper: But who so confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.* Not that any Man is to confess his secret Sins to others, except in Case that he cannot otherwise find Relief: Nor that a Man is to publish those Offences of his own, by which he may further dishonour God, and hinder the Gospel: But when the Sin is open already, and specially when the offence of others, the hardning of the wicked, the satisfaction of the Church concerning our Repentance, do require our Confession, and open Lamentation; the humble Soul both must and will submit to it; but the rotten-hearted, unhumbled Hypocrite will confess but in these Cases: 1. When the *secresie* of the Confession, or the *smallness* of the Fault, or the *customarines* of such Confessing, doth make it to be a matter of no great Disgrace. 2. Or when it is so open, that it is in vain to attempt to hide it, and his Confession will do nothing to increase the Disgrace. 3. Or when Conscience is awakened, or they see they must die, or are forced by some terrible Judgment of God: In all these Cases the wicked may confess. And so *Judas* will confess, *I have sinned in betraying the innocent Blood:* And *Pharaoh* will confess, *I and my People have sinned.* And a Thief on the Gallows will confess; and the vilest Wretches on their Death-bed will confess: But we have more Death-bed Confessions, than voluntary Confessions before the Church. Nay, so far hath Pride and Hypocrisie prevailed, and the ancient Discipline of the *Church* been neglected, that I think in most Countries in *England*, there are many more that make

make *Confessions* on the *Gallows*, then personally in the *Congregation*.

2. *Humiliation* must be also expressed, by all those *external means*, and signs which *God* by *Scripture*, or *Nature* calleth us to. As by *tears*, and groans, so far as we can seasonably procure them. And by *Fasting* and laying by our worldly pomp and bravery, and using mean (though decent) attire: and by condescending to men of the lower sort, and stooping to the meanest: By *humble Language*, and Carriage: and by forgiving others, on this account, that we are sensible of the greatness of our *Debts to God*. And thus I have briefly shewed you the true Nature of *Humiliation* that you may know what it is that I am perswaing you to, and which you must submit your *hearts* unto.

II. When I have told yon the *Use* and Ends of *Humiliation*, you will see more of *Reason* of its necessity to your selves. And first, it is one Use of *Humiliation*, to help on the *Mortification* of the flesh, or *Carnal-self*, and to annihilate it as it is the *Idol* of the *Soul*. The nature of mans sinful, and miserable estate, is, that he that he is fallen from *God* to *Himself*; and liveth now to *Himself* studing, and loving and pleasing *Himself*, his *Natural self*, above *God*. And a sinner will let go many outward *sins*, and be driven from the Out-works before he will let go *Carnal self*, and be driven from the Castle and strength of sin. There is no part of *Mortification* so Necessary, and so Hard as *Self denial*: Indeed this doth virtually comprehend all the rest, and if this be done, all's done. If it were but his Friend, his Superfluities, his House, his Lands, perhaps a *Carnal heart* might part with it: But to part with his *life*, his *All*, his *Self*, this is a hard saying to him, and enough to make him go away sorrowful, as *Luke* 18. 22, 23, 24. And therefore here appeareth the Necessity of *Humiliation*: This layeth all the *Load* on *Self*; and breaketh the *heart* of the *old man*; and maketh

maketh a man loath *himself*, that formerly doted on *himself*. It layeth this Tower of *Babel* in the dust, and maketh us abhor our selves in dust and ashes: It setteth the house on fire about our ears, which we both *Trusted* and *Delighted* in. And makes us not only *see*, but *feel*, that its time for us to be gone. Pride is the *Master Vice* in the unsanctified: and its the part of *Humiliation* to cast it down. *Self-seeking* is the business of their Lives; till *Humiliation* help to turn the stream; And then if you did but see their thoughts, you should see them think most vilely of *themselves*: And, if you do but over-hear their *Prayers* or *Complaints*, you shall hear them still cry out upon *themselves*, and beg help against *themselves*, their greatest *Enemies*.

2. The next Use of *Humiliation* (and implyed in this) is, to Mortifie those *sins*, which *Carnal-self* doth live upon, and is maintained by; and to stop all the avenues, or passages of its provision. *Sin* is *sweet* and *dear* to all that are unsanctified; But *Humiliation* makes it bitter and base. As the *Indians* cured the *Spanish Captain* of his Thirst after *Gold*, by pouring *melted Gold* down his *throat*; or as *Children* are perswaded from playing with a *Bee-hive*, when they are once or twice stung by them; or from playing with snappish dogs, if when they are bitten by them: So God will teach his *Children* to know what it is to play with *sin*, when they have smarted by it. They will know a nettle from a harmless herb, when they feel the sting; we are so apt to live by *sense*, that *God* seeth it needful, that our *Faith* have something of sense to help it. When the *Consciences* doth accuse, and the heart is smarting, and groaning in pain, and we feel that no shifting, or striving will deliver us, then we begin to be wiser then before, and to know what sin is, and what it will do for us. When that which was our delight, is become our burden, and a burden too heavy for us to bear, it cureth our delighting in it. When *David* was watering his couch with his tears, and made them his drink, his *sin* was not the same thing to him,

as it was in the committing. *Humiliation* washeth away the painting of this Harlot, and sheweth her in her deformity. It unmasketh *sin*, which had got the vizard of *Virtue*, or of a small matter, or harmless thing. It unmasketh *Satan*, who was transformed into a Friend, or an *Angel of Light*, and sheweth him, as we say, with his cloven feet and horns. How hard is it to cure a worldling of the love of money? But when *God* hath laid such a load of it on his *Conscience*, that makes him groan, and cry for help, he hath then enough of it: When he feels those words in *Jam.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. And he begins to weep, and howl for the Miseries that are coming on him, and he feels the stink of his *corrupted Riches*, and the Canker of his *Gold* and *Silver* do begin to eat his flesh as fire, and his Idol is but a witness against him, then he is better able to judge of it then he was before. The wanton thinks he hath a happy life, when the *harlots lips* do drop as the honycomb: But when he perceiveth her end is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two edged sword, and that her feet go down to *death*, and her steps take hold on *Hell*, and he lieth in sorrow complaining of his folly, *Prov.* 5. 3, 4, 5, 11, 12. he is then of a more rectified judgement then he was. *Manasseth* humbled in irons, is not the same as he was upon the *Throne*: Though *Grace* did more to it then his fetters, yet were they some way serviceable to that end. *Humiliation* openeth the door of the *heart*, and telleth you what *sin* is to the quick, and letteth in the words of *life*, which passeth no farther then the ear or brain. It is a tireing work to talk to *dead men*, that have lost their feeling; especially when it is an affective and practical doctrine, which we must deliver to them, which is lost if it be not *felt* and practiced: Till *Humiliation* comes, we speak to *dead men*, or at least to men that are fast *asleep*. How many *Sermons* have I heard that one would think, should have turned mens *hearts* within them, and made them cry out against their *sins*, with sorrow and shame in the face of the Congregation

gation, and never meddle with them more! when yet the Hearers have scarce been moved by them, but gone away as they came, as if they knew not what the *Preacher* said, because their *Hearts* were all the while *asleep* within them. But a *humbled Soul*, is an *awakened Soul*: It will regard what is said to it; especially when they perceive that it cometh from the Lord, and concerneth their Salvation. It is a great encouragement to us, to speak to a Man that hath Ears, and Life, and Feeling; that will meet the Word with an Appetite, and take it with some Relish, and let down the Food that is put into their Mouths. The Will is the chiefest Fort of Sin. If we can there get in upon it, we may do something: But if it keep the *Heart*, and we can get no nearer it than the Ear or Brain, there will no good be done. Now *Humiliation* openeth us a passage to the Heart, that we may assault Sin in its strength. When I tell you of the abominable Nature of Sin that caused the Death of Christ, and causeth Hell, and tell you that it is better to run into the Fire, than to commit the least Sin wilfully; tho' it be such as the World makes nothing of; another Man may hear all this, and superficially believe it, and say it is true: But it is the *humbled Soul*, that *feeleth* what I say. What a stir have we with a *Drunkard*, or *Worldling*, or any other sensual Sinner, in perswading him to cast away his Sins with detestation; and all too little purpose! Sometime he will, and sometime he must needs be *tasting* them again; and thus he stands dallying, because the Word hath not mastered his Heart. But when God comes in upon the Soul as with a Tempest, and throweth open the Doors, and as it were thundereth and lighteneth in the *Conscience*, and layeth hold upon the Sinner, and shaketh him all in pieces by his Terrors, and asketh him, *Is sinning good for thee? Is a sleshly careless Life so good? Thou wretched Worm: Thou foolish piece of Clay: Durest thou thus abuse me to my Face? Dost thou not know that I look on? Is*

this the Work that I made thee for, and that I feed and preserve thee, and continue thee alive for? Away with thy sin, without any more ado, or I will have thy Soul away, and deliver thee to the Tormentors. This wakeneth him out of his *Dalliance* and *Delays*; and makes him see that God is in good earnest with him, and therefore he must be so with God. If a Physician have a Patient that is addicted to his Appetite, who hath the Gout, or Stone, or other Disease, and he forbid him Wine, or Strong Drink, or such Meats as he desireth; as long as he feels himself at ease, he will be venturing on them, and will not be curbed by the Words of the Physician: But when the *Fit* is on him, and he feels the Torment, then he will be ruled: *Pain* will teach him more effectually than *Words* could do. When he *feeleth* what is hurtful to him, and *feeleth* that it always makes him *sick*, it will restrain him more than *hearing* of it could do. So when *Humiliation* doth break your Hearts, and make you feel that you are sick of *Sin*, and filleth your *Soul* with smart and sorrow, then you will be the more willing that God should destroy it in you. When it lieth so heavy on you, that you are unable to look up, and makes you go to God with Groans and Tears, and cry, *O Lord be merciful to me a Sinner*; when you are fain to go to *Ministers* for ease to your *Consciences*, and fill their Ears with Accusations of your selves, and open even your odious shameful Sins, then you will be content to let them go. Now there is no talking to you of *Mortification*, and the resolute rejecting of your Sins; the Precepts of the Gospel are too strict for you to submit to. But a broken Heart would change your Minds. The healthful Ploughman saith, *Give me that which I love: These Physicians would bring us all to their Rules, that they may get Money by us; I never mean to follow their Directions*, But when Sickness is upon him, and he hath tried all his own Skill in vain, and Pain giveth him no Rest, then send for the Physician; and then he will do any thing,

thing, and take any thing whatever he will give him, so that he may but be eased and recovered. So when your Hearts are whole and unhumbled, these *Preachers* and *Scriptures* are too strict for you; you must have that which you love; self-conceited precise *Ministers* must leave to talk; but you will never believe that God is of their Mind, or will damn Men for taking that which they have a mind of. O but when these Sins are as Swords in your Hearts, and you begin to feel what Ministers told you of, then you will be of another Mind: Away then with this Sin; there is nothing so odious, so hurtful, so intolerable. O that you could be rid of it, whatever it cost you! Then he will be your best Friend that can tell how to kill it, and be free from it, and he that would draw you to it, would be as Satan himself to you, *Mat.* 16. 22, 23. *Gal.* 1. 8, 9. *Humiliation* diggeth so deep, that it undermineth Sin, and the Fortress of the Devil; and when the Foundation is rooted up, it will soon be overthrown. When the *Murderers of Christ* were pricked to the Heart, they then cry out for *Counsel* to the Apostles, *Acts* 2. 37. When a Murderer of the Saints is stricken blindfold to the Earth, and the Spirit withal doth humble his Soul, he will then cry out, *Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?* Acts 9. 6. When a cruel Jaylour that scourged the Servants of Christ, is by an *Earthquake* brought to a *Heart-quake*, he will then cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?* Acts 16. 30.

And here comes in the usefulness of *Afflictions*; even because they are so great advantages to *Humiliation*. Men will be brought to some Reason by Extremities. When they lie a dying, a Man may talk to them, and they will not so proudly fly in his Face, nor make a scorn of the Word of the Lord, as in their Prosperity they did. God will be more regarded when he pleadeth with them with the Rod in his Hand, Stripes are the best Logick and Rhetorick for a *Fool*. When Sin hath captivated their Reason to

their Flesh, the Arguments to convince them must be such, as the Flesh is capable of perceiving. We may long tell a Beast of Dangers and Discommodities, before we can perswade him from that which he loves. *Sensuality* doth brutifie Men in too great a measure: And so far as they are brutish, it is not the clearest Reasons that will prevail; and if God did not maintain in corrupted Man some Remnants of *free Reason*, we might preach to *Beasts* as hopefully as to *Men*. But *Afflictions* tend to weaken the Enemy that doth captivate them; as *Prosperity* by accident tends to strengthen him. The Flesh understandeth the Language of the Rod, better than the Language of *Reason*, or of the *Word of God*.

And as the sensible part of our *Humiliation* promoteth *Mortification*; so the rational and voluntary *Humiliation*, which is proper to the sanctified, is a principal part of *Mortification* it self. And thus you may see, that its necessary that we be *throughly humbled*, that Sin may be throughly killed in us.

3. Another use of *Humiliation* is, to fit the Soul for a meet Entertainment of *further Grace*; and that both for the Honour of *Christ* and *Grace*, and for our own Welfare.

1. In respect of *Christ*, it is equal that he should dwell in such Souls only as are fit to entertain him. Neither his Person, nor his Business, are such as can suite with the *unhumbled Heart*. Till *Humiliation* make a Sinner feel his Sin and Misery, it is not possible, that Christ as Christ, should be heartily Welcome to him, or received in that sort as his Honour doth expect. Who cares for the Physician, that feels no *Sickness*, and fears not *Death*? He may pass by the Doors of such a Man, and he will not call him in: But when Pain and Fears of Death are on him, he will send, and seek, and bid him Welcome. Will any Man fly to Christ for Succour, that feeleth not his Wants and Danger? Will they lay hold on him, as the

the only Refuge of their Souls, and cleave to him as their only hope, that feel no great need of him? Will they lie at his Feet, and beg for Mercy, that feel themselves well enough without him? When Men do but hear of Sin and Misery, and superficially believe it, they may coldly look after Christ and Grace; and feel the worth of the later, in such a manner as they feel the weight of the former. But never is Christ valued and sought after as Christ, 'till Sorrow have taught us how to value him: Nor is he entertained in the necessary Honour of a *Redeemer*, 'till *Humiliation* throw open all the Doors; no Man can seek him with his *whole* Heart, that seeks him not with a *broken* Heart.

And it's certain that Christ will come on no lower terms into the Soul. Tho' he come to do us good, yet he will have the Honour of doing it; tho' he come to heal us, and not for any need he hath of us, yet he will have the Welcome that's due to a Physician. He comes to save us, but he will be honoured in our Salvation. He inviteth all to the *Marriage-Supper*, and even compelleth them to come in: But he expecteth that they bring a *Wedding-garment*, and come not in a *Garb* that will dishonour his House. Tho' his Grace be free, yet he will not expose it to contempt, but will have the fulness and freeness of it glorified. Tho' he came not to *redeem* himself but us, yet he came to be *glorified* in the Work of our *Redemption*. He hath no *Grace* so free, as to save them that will not esteem it, and give him Thanks for it. And therefore tho' *Faith* is enough to accept the Gift, yet must it be a *thankful Faith*, that will magnifie the Giver, and an *humble Faith* that will feel the worth of it, and an *Obedient Faith* that will answer the Ends of it. And therefore that *Faith* which is the Condition of our *Justification*, is fitted as well to the Honour of the Giver, as the Commodity of the Receiver. And as *Reason* telleth us that it should be so, so Christian Ingenuity consenteth

that it be so. The *Soul* that is truly united to Christ, and partaketh of his Nature, doth think its own Receiving greatest, where the Honour of Christ is greatest; and it cannot take pleasure in the Thoughts of such a kind of *Grace*, as should dishonour the Lord of *Grace* himself. As Christ is solicitous for the saving of the *Soul*, so he makes the *Soul* solicitous of the right entertainment of him that saveth it. And therefore through his *Blood*, and not his *Teaching* or his *Government*, was the *Ransom* of our *Souls*; yet he is resolved to justifie none by his Blood, but on the Condition of that *Faith*, which is an hearty Consent to his *Teaching* and *Dominion*. It is not in the Application, or bestowing of Christ's Benefits, as it was in the purchasing of them. When he came to ransome us, he consented to be a Sufferer, and gave his *Cheeks* to the *Smiter*, and submitted to Reproach; he endured the *Cross*, despising the Shame; and being reviled, he reviled not, but prayed for his *Persecutors*; but when he comes by his *saving Grace* into the *Soul*, he will not there be entertained with contempt; for in the Flesh he came on purpose to be humbled; but in the *Spirit* he comes to be exalted: In the Flesh he came to condemn the Sin that reigned in our Flesh, (*Rom.* 8. 3.) and so was made sin for us, (that is, *a Sacrifice for Sin*) (2 *Cor.* 5. 21.) But in the Spirit he comes to conquer our Flesh, and by the Law of his quickning *Spirit*, to free us from the Law of Sin and Death; both that the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, and also that there might be no Condemnation to us, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, *Rom.* 8. 1, 2, 4. The *Kingdom of Christ* was not *worldly*; for if it had been *worldly*, he would have sought to establish it by strength of Arms, and fighting, which are *worldly Means*, John 18. 36. But his *Kingdom* is *within us*: It is a *Spiritual Kingdom*; and therefore tho' in the World he was used with Contempt, as a *Fool*, and as a *Sinner*, and a Man of *Sorrows*; yet *within* us he will be used with Ho-

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nour and Reverence, as a King and *absolute Lord*. It was the Hour of the Executioner, and the Power of Darkness, when he was in his suffering; but it is the Hour of his *Triumph* and *Marriage*, and the prevailing Power of the *Heavenly Light*, when he cometh by *saving Grace* into the *Soul*. On the *Cross* he was as a Sinner, and stood in our place, and bore what was our due, and not his own. But in the Soul he is the *Conqueror of Sin*, and cometh to take possession of his own, and doth the Work that belongeth to him in his Dignity; and therefore he will *there* be acknowledged, and honoured. On the *Cross* he was pulling down the *Kingdom* of *Satan*, and setting up his own, but in the Preparatory Purchase: But in the *Soul* he doth by immediate Execution. On the *Cross* Sin and Satan had their full Blow at *him*: But when he entreth the *Soul*, he hath his Blow at them, and ceaseth not till he have destroyed them. In *purchasing* he expended his own; but in *converting* he takes possession of that which he purchased. In a word, he came into the World in Flesh for his *undertaken Humiliation*; but he comes into the *Soul* by his *Spirit*, for his deserved Exaltation: And therefore, tho' he endured to be spit upon in the *Flesh*, he will not endure to be slighted in the *Soul*: And as in the World he was scorned with the Title of a *King*, and crowned with Thorns, and cloathed in such Kingly Robes, as might make him the fitter Object for their Reproach: So when his *Spirit* entreth into the *Soul*, he will be there inthroned in our most reverent, subjective, and deepest esteem, and crowned with our highest Love and Thankfulness, and bowed to with the Tenders of Obedience, and our Praise. The *Cross* shall there be the Portion of his Enemies, and the *Crown* and *Scepter* shall be his; and as all were preferred before him on Earth, even *Barabas* himself; so all things shall be put under him in the *sanctified Soul*, and he shall be preferred before all.

This is the end of *Humiliation*, to make ready the Heart for a fuller Entertainment of the *Lord* that bought it; and to prepare the way before him, and fit the *Soul* to be the *Temple of his Spirit*. An *humbled Soul* would never have put him off with Excuses from Oxen, and Farms, and Wives: As *Luke* 14. and *Matth.* 22. But the *unhumbled* will make light of him.

And 2. As *Christ* himself will be honourably received, or not at all, so must the *Mercies* and *Graces* which he offereth. He will not apply his *Blood* and *Righteousness* to them that care not for it: He will not *pardon* such a Mass of Iniquity, and remove such Mountains as lie upon the *Soul*, for them that feel not the Necessity of such a *Mercy*. He will not take Men from the Power of the *Devil*, and the Drudgery of *Sin*, and the Suburbs of *Hell*, and make them his Members, and the *Sons of God*, and the *Heirs of Heaven*, that have not learn'd the Value of these Benefits, but set more by their very *Sin* and *Misery*, and the Trifles of the World. Christ doth not despise his *Blood*, his *Spirit*, his *Covenant*, his *Pardon*, nor his *Heavenly Inheritance*; and therefore he will give them to none that do despise them, 'till he teacheth them better to know their worth. Do you think it would stand with the *Wisdom of Christ*, to give such *unspeakable Blessings* as these, to Men that have not *Hearts* to value them? Why, it is more to give a Man *Justification* and *Adoption*, than to give him all this visible World; the *Sun*, the *Moon*, the *Firmament*, and the *Earth*. And should these be given to one that cares not for them? Why by this means *God* should miss of his Ends: He should not have the *Love*, the *Honour*, or the *Thanks* that he intended by his Gift. It is necessary therefore that the *Soul* be throughly humbled, that Pardon may be received as Pardon, and Grace as Grace, and not set light by.

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And 2. As this is necessary for the Honour both of *Christ* and *Grace*, so also it is necessary for your own *Benefit* and *Consolation*. The *Mercy* cannot indeed be ours, if *Humiliation* do not make us capable of it. These *Cordials* must be taken into an empty Stomach, and not be drowned in Flegm and Filth. A Man on the Gallows will be glad of a Pardon; but a Stander-by that thinks he is innocent, would not regard it, but take it for an Accusation. There is no great Sweetness in the Name of a *Redeemer*, to an *unhumbled Soul*. It sets not by the *Spirit*; the *Gospel* is no *Gospel* to it, the Tidings of *Salvation* are not so glad to such a one, as the Tidings of *Riches*, or *worldly Delights* would be. As it is the Preparation of the Stomach that maketh our Meat sweet to us; and the coursest Fare is pleasanter to the Sound, than Sweet-meats to the Sick: So if we were not emptied of our Selves, and vile and lost in our own Apprehensions; and if *Contrition* did not quicken our Appetites, the Lord himself, and all the Miracles of his *saving Grace*, would be but as a thing of nought in our Eyes; and we should be but weary to hear or think of them. But O what an *unestimable Treasure is Christ to the humbled Soul*. What *Life is in his Promises?* What *Sweetness in every Passage of his Grace? And what a Feast in his unmeasurable Love?*

4. Another Use of Humiliation implied in the former, is, that it is necessary to bring Men to yield to the Terms of the *Covenant of Grace*: Nature holds fast its fleshly Pleasures, and lives by feeling, and upon present Things, and knows not how to live upon Invisibles, by a Life of Faith. And this is the Life that all must live, that will live in *Christ*: And therefore he calleth them to the forsaking of all; the crucifying the World and Flesh, the denying of themselves, if they will be his Disciples. But O how loth is Nature to part with all, and make a full Resignation unto *Christ!* But fain it would make sure of present things, for fear lest the Promises of *Heaven*

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should but deceive them; and then they would have *Heaven* at last as a reserve. And on these Terms it is that *Hypocrites* are *Religious*, and thus it is that they deceive their Souls. But when the Heart is truly *broken*, it will then stand no longer on such Terms with *Christ*, but yield up *all*. It will then no longer *Condition* with him, but stand to *his Conditions*, and thankfully accept them. Any thing will then serve with *Christ*, and *Grace*, and the hopes of *Glory*.

5. Another Use of *Humiliation* is, to fit us for the retaining and improving of *Grace*, when we have received it. The Proverb is, *Lightly come, lightly go*. If *God* should give the Pardon of Sin to the *unhumbled*, how soon would it be cast away? And how easily would such be hearkning to Temptation, and returning to their Vomit! *The burnt Child*, we say, *dreads the Fire*. When Sin hath kill'd you once, and broken your Hearts, you will think the worse of it while you live. And when a *Temptation* comes, you will think of your former Smart: *Is not this it that cost me so many Groans, and laid me in the Dust, and had almost damned me? And shall I go to it again? Was I so hardly recovered, by a Miracle of Mercy? And shall I run again into the Misery that I was saved from? Had I not Sorrow, and Fear, and Care enough, but I must go back again for more, and renew my Trouble?* Thus the remembrance of your Sorrows, will be a continual Preservative to you. And a contrite Spirit that is emptied of it self, and is taught the worth of Christ and Mercy, will not only hold them fast, but will know how to use them, in thankfulness to God, and benefit to himself.

6. Another Use of *Humiliation*, is to fit the *Soul* for its approach to *God* himself, from whom it had revolted. As it beseems not any Creature, to approach the *God of Heaven*, but in Reverential Humility: So it beseems not any Sinner to approach him, but in contrite Humility: Who can come out of such Wickedness and Misery, and not bring along the Sence of it

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on his Heart? It beseemeth not a Prodigal to meet his Father as confidently and boldly, as if he had never departed from him; but to say, *Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*, Luke 15. 18. It is not ingenuous for a *guilty Soul*, or one that is snatch'd as a Brand out of the Fire, to look towards God with a brazen Face, but with *Shame* and *Sorrow*, to hang down the Head, and smite upon the Breast, and say, *O Lord be merciful to me a Sinner. For God resisteth the proud, but giveth Grace to the humble*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. Jam. 4. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet he hath regard unto the lowly: But the proud he knoweth afar off*, Psal. 138. 6. *For thus saith the High and Holy One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is holy; and I dwell in the High and Holy Place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones*, Isai. 57. 15. *To this Man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and that trembles at my Word*, Isai 66. 2. *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit*, Psal. 34. 18. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit: A broken and contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*, Psal. 51. 17. There is no turning to God, unless we *loath our selves for all our abominations*. Ezek. 16. 63.

The nearer we approach him, the more we must *abhor our selves in dust and ashes*, Job 42. 6. He will not embrace a Sinner in his *Dung*; but will first *wash and cleanse him*, Isa. 1. 16. *Conversion* must make us humble, and as little Children, that are teachable, and look not after great Matters in the World, or else there is no entring the *Kingdom of God*, Mat. 18. 3, 4. And thus you see the *Uses*, and *Necessity* of *Humiliation*.

III. By what hath been already said, you may perceive what *Mistakes* are carefully to be avoided, about

bout your *Humiliation*, and with what *caution* it must be fought.

1. One Error that you must take heed of, is, *That you take not Humiliation for an indifferent thing*, or for such an appurtenance of *Faith* as may be spared: think not an *humbled soul* while such can be *sanctified*. Some carnal hearts conceive, that it is only more *heinous sinners* that must be contrite and broken-hearted, and that this is not necessary to them that have been, brought up civily or religiously from their youth. But it is as possible to be *saved* without *Faith*, as without *Repentance*, and that especial *Humiliation*, which I described to you before. Its part of your *Sanctification*.

2. Another mistake to be carefully avoided is, *The placing of your Humiliation, either only, or principally, in the Passionate parts or in the outward expression of those passions*. I mean, either in pinching *grief*, and *sorrow* of heart, or else in *tears*. But you must remember that the Life of it is, as was said before, in the *Judgement* and the *Will*. It is not the measure of passionate sorrow and anguish, that will best shew the measure of your *sincere Humiliation*: much less is it our *tears* or *outward expressions*. But it is your *low esteem* of your selves, and *contentedness* to be vile in the eyes of others: and your displacency with your selves, and willingness to mourn and weep for sin as much as *God* would have you: with the rest of the acts of the *Judgment* and *Will* before described.

Two great dangers are here before you to be avoided. First, some there be that have terrible pangs of sorrow, and are ready to tear their own hair, yea, or make awake themselves as *Judas*, in the horror of their *Consciences*: and these may seem to have *true Humiliation*, and yet have none. And some can weep abundantly at a *Sermon* or in a prayer, or in mentioning their *sin* to others: and therefore think that they are truly humbled and yet it may be nothing so. For if at the same time their *hearts* are in love with *sin*, or had rather keep it then let it go, or have not

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an habitual hatred to it, and a predominant superlative *Love to God*, their *Humiliation* is no *saving work*. That which is in the passions and tears, may be even forced against your wills: and it signifieth scarce so much as a *common Grace*, where you are not willing of it. Many an one can *weep* through a passionate, womanish, tender nature, and yet not only remain unhumbled, but be proud in a very high degree. How many such do we ordinarily see! especially *women* that can weep more at a *duty* or *conference*, then some that are truly *broken-hearted* could do in all their lives: and yet be so far from being *vile* in their own eyes, and willing to be so in the eyes of others, that they will *hate* and *reproach*, and rail at those that charge them with the *faults* which they seemed to lament; or at least that charge them with disgraceful sins; and they will excuse and mince their *sins*, and make a small matter of them, and love none so well as those that have the highest thoughts of them. So that Pride doth ordinarily reign in their hearts, and break out in their *words* and *lives*, and make them hate the faithfulest reprovers, and live in contention with any that dishonour them, for all the tears that come from their eyes. Judge not therefore by *passions*, or *tears* alone, but but by the *Judgement* and the *Will*, as is aforesaid.

2. Another sort there are much better and happier then the former, that yet to their great trouble are mistaken in this point: and that is, they that think they have no true *Humiliation*, because they find not such pangs of *sorrow*, and *freedom of tears*, as others have: when as their *hearts* are *contrite*, when even they cannot weep a *tear*. Tell me but this; are you *vile* in your own *eyes*, because you are *guilty of sin*, and that against the *Lord* whom you chiefly love? Do you loath your *sins*, because of your *abominations* and could you heartily wish, that you had been *suffering* when you were *sinning*: and if it were to do again, would you choose to *suffer* rather then to *sin*? Have you a desire to *grieve*, when you cannot passionately *grieve*, and a desire

fire to *weep* when you cannot *weep*? Can you quietly bear it, when you are vilified by others, because you know your selves to be so *vile*? And are you thankful to a plain Recoverer, though he tell you of the most disgraceful sin? do you think meanly of your own *sayings* and *doings*, and think better of others, where there is any ground, then of your selves? Do you *justifie Gods afflictions*, and mens true rebukes, and think your selves unworthy of the *Communion* of the *Saints*, or to see their faces; and unworthy to live on the face of the earth? Yea would you *justifie God*, if he should condemn you? This is the state of an *humbled Soul*. Find but this, and you need not doubt of *Gods acceptance* though you were unable to shed a *tear*. There is more *Humiliation* in a base esteem of our selves, then in a thousand tears: and more in a *will*, or desire to weep for sin, then in *tears*, that come through force of terror, or moisture of the brain, or passionate tenderness of Nature. If the Will be right you need not fear. It is he that most hateth *sin*, and is hardlyest drawn to it, that is truliest *humbled* for it. He that will *lament* it to day, and *commit* it to morrow, is far less humbled and penitent, that would not be drawn to it with the hopes of all the *pleasures* of the world, nor commit it, if it were to save his life.

3 To avoid this, some run into the contrary mistake, and think that *sorrow* and *tears* that they may *repent* as well without them as with them; and they lay all in some dull uneffectual wishes; and so they think the *Heart* is changed. But certainly God made not the *Affections* in vain. It cannot be that any man can have a *sanctified Will*, but his *Affections* will hold some correspondence with it, and be commanded by it. Though we cannot mourn in that Measure as we desire, yet some sorrow there will be whersoever the *Heart* is truly changed. And *appretiative* this sorrow will be the greatest. No man can heartily believe that *sin* is the greatest evil to his *Soul*, and not be grieved for it. And indeed our Liveliest Affection should be exercised

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about these weighest things. It is a shame to see a man mourn for a friend, and whine under a Cross that touch but the flesh, and yet be so insensible of the plague of *sin* and the *anger* of the *Lord*, and to laugh and jest with such mountains on his *Soul*. Though grief and tears be not the *heart*, or principal part of our *Humiliation*, yet are they to be lookt after as our duty; yea *sorrow* in some measure is of absolute necessity: and the want of *tears* is no good sign in them that have *tears* for other things. Indeed the sense of our folly and unkindness should be so great, that it should even turn our *hearts* into *sorrow*, and *melt* them in our breasts and draw forth streams of *tears* from our eyes; and if we cannot bring our selves to this, we must yet lament the hardness of our *hearts*, and not excuse it.

4. In the next place you are hence informed how to answer that Question, *Whether it be possible for a man to be humble and repent too much.* That part of *Humiliation* which consisteth in the acts of the *Understanding* and the *Will*, *cannot* be so much as too the *Intention* of the *Act*; And if it be too much as to the *Objective extent*, then as it is mis-guided, so it changeth its Nature, and ceaseth to be the thing that it was before. A man may think worse of himself then he is, by thinking falsely of himself, as that he is guilty of the *sin*, which he is not guilty of; But this is not the same thing with *true Humiliation*. But to have too clear an apprehension of the evil of his *sin*, and his one vileness, this he need not fear. And in the will it is more cleare; No man can be too willing to be rid of *sin*, in Gods time and way; nor be too much averse from it, as it is against the Lord. But then the other part of *Humiliation*, which consisteth in the depth of *sorrow*, or in *tears*, may possibly be too much; Though I know very few that are guilty of it, or need to fear it; because the common case of the world is to be stupid and hard-hearted; and most of the *Godly* are lamentably insensible. But yet some few there are, that have need of this advice, that they strive

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not for too great a measure of grief. Let your hearts be against *sin* as much as is possible; But yet let there be some limits in your grief and tears. And this counsel is necessary to these sorts of people. 1. To *Melancholy people*, that are in danger of being distracted, and made unreasonable and useless by overmuch sorrow. Their thoughts will be strong, musing, and sad, and dark, and full of fears, and either make things worse then they are, or else be deeplyer affected with them then their heads can bear. 2. And this is the Case of some *weak spirited women*, that are not *Melancholy*; but yet natural weakness of their *brains*, and strength of their *passions*, are unable to endure those *serious deep affecting apprehensions* which others may desire; but the depth of their sensibility, and greatness of their *passion*, doth presently endanger the crazing of their *brains*, and quickly cast them into *Melancholy*, or worse.

And this is a very heavy affliction where it comes, both to the persons themselves, and those about them. To be deprived of the *Use of Reason*, is one of the greatest *corporal calamities* in this life. And it is matter of offence, and dishonour to the Gospel in the eyes of the ungodly that understand not the Case. When they see any languish in unmeasurable sorrow, or fall into distraction, it is a grievous temptation to them, to fly from *Religion*, and avoid *godly sorrow*, and all *serious thoughts of heavenly things*, and it occasioneth the foolish scorners to say, that *Religion* makes men mad; and that this *Humiliation* and *Conversion* which we call them to, is the way to bring them out of their wits. So that by reason of the grief of the *godly*, and the hardening of the *ungodly*, the Case is so sad, that it requireth the greatest care to avoid it.

Quest. *But if it be so dangerous to sorrow either too little, or too much, what shall a poor sinner do in such a streight? And how shall he know when to restrain his sorrows?*

Answ.

Answ. It is but very few in the World, that have cause to fear excess of this kind of Sorrow. The common Case of Men is to be blockish, and worldly Sorrow doth cast more into Melancholy, and Distractions, than godly Sorrow: But for those few that are in danger of excess, I shall first tell you how to discern it, and then how to remedy it.

When your *Sorrow* is greater than your Brains can bear, without apparent danger of *Destruction*, or a *Melancholy Disturbance* and *Diminution* of your *Understanding*, then it is certainly too much to be restrained. For if you overthrow your *Reason*, you will be a Reproach to *Religion*, and you will be fit for nothing that's truly good, either to your own *Edification*, or the *Service of God*.

2. If you be in any grievous Disease, which Sorrow would increase to the hazard of your Life, you have Reason to restrain it: Tho' you may not forbear *Repenting*, or *Carefulness* of your *Salvation*, yet the Passion of Grief, you must moderate and abate.

3. When Sorrow is so great as to discompose your *Mind*, or enfeeble your *Body*; so as to unfit you for the Service of God, and make you more unable to do Good, or receive Good, you have Reason then to moderate and restrain it.

4. When the greatness of your Sorrow, doth overmatch the necessary Measure of your *Love*, or *Joy*, or *Thanks*, and keep out these, and takes up more of your Spirit than its part, having no room for greater *Duties*, then it is excessive, and to be restrained. There are some that will strive and struggle with their *Hearts*, to wring out a *few Tears*, and increase their *Sorrow*, that yet make little *Conscience* of other *Affections*, and will not strive half so much to increase their *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Joy*.

5. When your *Sorrow* by the greatness of it, doth draw you into *Temptation*, either to despair, or think hardly of God and his Service, or to undervalue his Grace,

Grace, and the Satisfaction of Christ, as if it were too scant, and insufficient for you, you have then cause to *moderate* and *restrain* it.

6. When your *Sorrow* is *unseasonable*, and will *needs* thrust in at those times when you are called to *Thankfulness* and *Joy*, you have then cause to moderate and restrain it at that season. Not that we should *wholly lay by Sorrow*, in any *Day of Joy* and *Thanksgiving*, unless we could lay by all our Sin in the Duties of that Day: Nor should we *wholly lay by Spiritual Comfort* and *Delight*, in *Days of greatest Humiliation*. For as our State is here mixt, of Grace and Sin, so must all our Duties be mix'd of Joy and Sorrow: It is only in *Heaven*, where we must have *unmixed Joys*, and only in *Hell* that there are *unmixed Sorrows*; or at least not in any state of *Grace*. But yet for all that, there are Seasons now, when one of these must be more eminently exercised, and the other in a lower Measure. As in times of Calamity, and after a Fall, we are called out so much to *Humiliation*, that *Comfort* should but moderate our *Sorrows*, and the exercise of it be veiled for that time: So in times of Special Mercies from the Lord, we may be called out to exercise our *Thanks*, and *Praise*, and *Joy*, so eminently, that Sorrow should but keep us *humble*, and be as it were serviceable to our *Joys*. When Grace and Mercy is most eminent, then Joy and Praise should be predominant (which is through the most of a *Christian-life*, that walketh uprightly and carefully with God:) And when Sin and Judgments are most eminent, Sorrow must be then predominant, as being a necessary means to *solid Joy*. And therefore ordinarily a Sinner that is but in the Work of *Conversion*, and newly coming to God from a rebellious State, must entertain more Sorrow, and let out himself more to Groans and Tears than afterward, when he is brought to *Reconciliation with God*, and *walketh in Integrity*.

Quest.

Quest. *But when is it that my Sorrow is too short, and I should labour to increase it?*

Answ. 1. When there is no apparent danger of the last-mentioned *Evils*, that is, of destroying your *Bodies*, distracting your *Brains*, discomposing your *Minds*, and drowning other Graces and Duties, and the rest; then you have little cause to be afraid of an excess.

2. When you have not Smart enough to cause you to value the *Love of Christ*, and highly prize his *Blood*, and the Effects of it, and hunger and thirst after him and his *righteousness*, and earnestly beg for the Pardon of your Sin; you have cause to desire then more Sorrow: If you feel no great need of *Christ*, but pass by him as lightly as the full Stomach by his Food, as if you could do well enough without him; you may be sure then you have need to be broken more. If you set not so much by the *Love of God*, that you would part with any thing in the World to *enjoy* it, and would think no Terms too dear for *Heaven*: You have need to lie under the sence of your *Sin* and *Misery* a little longer, and to beseech the *Lord* to save you from that Heart of Stone. When you can hear of the Love and Sufferings of your *Redeemer*, without any warmth of Love to him again; and can read or hear the Promises of *Grace*, and Offers of *Christ* and *Eternal Life*, without any considerable Joy or Thankfulness, it's time for you then to beg of *God* a tender Heart.

3. When you make many Pauses in the Work of your *Conversion*, and are sometime in a *good Mind*, and then again at a *stand*, as if you were yet unresolved whether to turn or no: When you stick at *Christ's* Terms of denying your selves, and crucifying the Flesh, and forsaking all, for the hopes of *Glory*, and think these Sayings somewhat hard, and are considering of the Matter, whether you should yield to them or not; or are secretly reserving somewhat to your selves; this certainly shews, that you are not yet sufficiently

ently *humbled*, or else you would never stand trifling thus with *God*. He must yet set your Sins in order before you, and hold you a while over the *Fire of Hell*, and ring your *Consciences* such a Peal, as shall make you yield and resolve your Doubts, and teach you not to dally with your Maker. If *Pharaoh* himself be off and on with God, and sometime he will let *Israel* go, and then again he will not; God will follow him with Plague after Plague, till he make him yield, and glad to drive, or hasten them away. And even where he deals in ways of *Grace*, he maketh so much use of Sorrows, as to make Men yield the sooner to his Terms, and glad to have *Mercy* on such Terms, if they were harder.

4. When you are heartless and dull under the *Ordinances of God*, and *Scripture* hath little Life or Sweetness to you, and you are almost indifferent whether you call upon *God* in secret, or no; and whether you go to the *Congregation*, and hear the *Word*, and joyn in *God's Praises*, and the Communion of the Saints, and you have no great relish in holy Conference, or any Ordinance, but do them almost meerly for Custom, or to please your *Consciences*, and not for any great need you feel of them, or good you find by them; this shews for certain you want some more of the *Rod* and *Spur*; your Hearts be not wakened and broken sufficiently, but *God* must take you in hand again.

5. When you can be mindless of God, and of the Life to come, and forget both your Sins and *Saviour's Blood*, and let out your Thoughts almost continually upon worldly Vanities, or common Things, as if you were over-grown the need of *Christ*; this shews that the Stone is yet in your Hearts, and that *God* must keep you to an harder Diet to mend your Appetites, and make you feel your Sin and Misery, 'till it call off your Thoughts from Things that less concern you, and teach you to mind your *everlasting state*. If you begin to forget your selves and him, it's time for you *to have a Remembrancer*. 6. When

6. When you begin to taste more sweetness in the Creature, and be more tickled with Applause and Honour, and pleased more with a full Estate, and more impatient with Poverty, or Wants, or Wrongs from Men, and Crosses in the World; and when you are set upon a thriving Course, and are eager to grow rich, and fall in Love with Money; when you drown your selves in worldly Cares, and Business, and are cumbred about many things, through your own Choice; this shews indeed that you are dangerously *unhumbled*: And if *God* have *Mercy* for you, he will bring you low, and make your Riches Gall and Wormwood to you, and *abate your Appetite*, and teach you to know that *one thing is needful*; and to be more eager after the Food that *perisheth not*, and hereafter to choose the *better part*, Luke 10. 41, 42. John 6. 27.

7. When you can return to play with the Occasions of Sin, or look upon it with a reconcilable Mind, as if you had yet some Mind on it, and could almost find in your Heart to be doing with it again; when you begin to have a mind of your old Company and Courses, or begin to draw as near it as you dare, and are *gazing upon the Bait*, and *tasting of the forbidden Thing*, and can scarce tell how to deny your Fancies, your Appetites, your Senses, their Desires; this shews that you want some wakening Work: *God* must yet read you another Lecture in the *Black Book*, and set you to spell those Lines of Blood, which it seems you have forgotten; and kindle a little of that Fire in your *Consciences*, which else you would run into, 'till you feel and understand, whether it be good *playing with Sin*, and the *Wrath of God*, and the *Everlasting Fire*.

8. When you begin to be indifferent as to your *Communion with God*, and think not much whether he accept you, and manifest his Love to you or not, but can huddle up your *Prayers*, and look no more after them, or what becomes of them; and use *Ordinances*, and

and seldom enquire of the success: When you can spare the *Spiritual Consolations* of the *Saints*, and fetch little of your Comfort from *Christ*, or *Heaven*; but from your *Friends*, and *Health*, and *Prosperity*, and *Accommodations*; and perhaps can be as merry in *carnal Company*, when you say and do as they, as if you were considering of the *Love of Christ*: This shews that *the Threatnings went not deep enough*. Sorrow hath yet another part to play: You must be taught better to know your Home, and to take more pleasure in your Father, and your Husband, and your Brethren, and your Inheritance, then in Strangers, or Enemies to God and you.

9. When you begin to grow wanton with *Ordinances*, or other *Mercies*, and instead of thankful receiving them, and feeding on them, you pick Quarrels with them, and nothing will please you: Either the *Minister* is too weak, or he is too curious, or too formal; you must have it this way, or that way; either you must have more of a form, or no form; in this gesture, or that order, and something or other is still amiss: This shews that you want humbling, and that you are fitter for the Rod, than for Meat. If *God* do but open you a Door into your Hearts, and shew you the Monsters and Emptiness that is there, you will then see, that the fault lay somewhere else than in the *Minister*, or the *Ordinances*: If it were in them, it was more in you. The cause of your loathing, and quarrelling with the *Word*, was the fulness of your own Stomach; and *God* must give you a Vomit, or Purge, that shall make your Hearts ache before it hath done working, and then your *Appetites* will be mended, and your *Wantonness* will cease; and that will be sweet to you, which before you slighted.

10. When you begin to be leavened with *Pride*, and think highly of your selves, and have good Conceits of your own *Parts* and *Performances*, and would be noted and taken for Some-body among the *Godly*, and

and you cannot endure to be overlook'd, or past by; when you think meanly of other Mens Parts, and Duties, in comparison of yours, and think your selves as wise as your *Teachers*, and begin to hear them as *Judges*, with a *Magisterial Spirit*, and think you could do as well as this your selves; when you are finding *fault* with that which should *nourish* you, and in every *Sermon* you are most noting the *defects*, and think that this you could have mended; when you itch to be *Teachers your selves*, and think your selves fitter to *preach* than to *learn*, to *rule* than to be *ruled*, to *answer* than to ask for *resolution*; when you think so well of your selves, that the *Church* is not pure or good enough for your Company, tho' *Christ* disowneth it not, and they force you not to Sin; when you grow censorious, and aggravate the Faults of others, and extenuate their Graces, and can see a Mote in another's Eye, but will discern none of their *Graces*, if they be not as high as *Mountains*, and none can pass for *Godly* with you, but those of the most eminent Magnitude; when you are itching after *Novelties in Religion*, and setting your Wisdom against the Present or Ancient *Church*; and affecting Singularity, because you will be of no common way; when you cannot hear this *Minister*, nor that *Minister*, tho' the *Ministers* of Christ; and you are harping upon that; *Come out from among them, and be ye separate:* As if *Christ* had called you to come out of the Church, when he called you to come out of the Company of *Infidels*; all this cries aloud for further *Humiliation:* You have a Tympany that must be prick'd, to let out the Wind that puffs you up: If you be not for *Perdition*, and to be forsaken, and given over to your selves, you must be fetch'd over again, and humbled with a Witness. When God hath turned your inside outward, and shewed you that you are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and that you are *empty Nothings*, who thought so well of your selves; he will then make you stoop to those that you despised, and think

your ſelves unworthy of the *Communion* of thoſe that before you thought unworthy of yours. He will make you think yours unworthy to hear thoſe *Miniſters* that you turned your back upon; and he will take down your teaching, talking Vein, and make you glad again to be Learners: In a word, he will by *Converſion* make you as little Children, or you ſhall never *enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.*

And this *Spiritual Pride* is a moſt lamentable Diſeaſe, and the iſſue uſually is exceeding ſad. For with many, 'tis the *Fore-runner of damnable Apoſtaſie*, and God gives them over to their own Conceits, and the *Wiſdom* which they ſo eſteem, 'till it have led them to *Perdition.* And thoſe that are *cured*, are many of them *cured* by the ſaddeſt way of any Men in the World. For it is uſual with God to let them alone, 'till they have run themſelves into ſome abominable Error, or fallen into ſome ſhameful ſcandalous Sin, 'till they are made an Hiſſing and By-word among Men; that Shame and Confuſion may bring them to their Wits, and they may learn to know what it was that they were *proud* of, and ſee that they were but *ſilly Worms.*

And thus I have ſhewed you, when you muſt ſeek after *deeper Humiliation*, and may conclude that you are not humbled enough: Yea, and when a greater Meaſure is of ſome Neceſſity to your Souls.

Queſt. *Well, but yet you have not told us what Courſe a poor Sinner ſhould take in ſuch a ſtrait, when he knows not whether his Humiliation, as to the affectionate part, be too little or too much.*

Anſw. 1. You may partly diſcern your ſelves by what is ſaid, whether you have need of more or leſs *Humiliation*, if you can but try your *Hearts* by theſe Signs. 2. But yet I would adviſe, and earneſtly perſwade you, in Caſes of difficulty, to betake your ſelves to ſome able faithful *Miniſter* for reſolution. If you feel Sorrow ſeize ſo deep upon your *Spirits*, that it diſtem-

distempereth you, or threatneth your *Understanding*, or your *Health*, especially if you are either *passionate Women*, or *melancholy Persons*: Stay not then any longer, lest delay do that which easily cannot be undone; but go and open your Case, and crave Advice. This is a principal Use of *Pastors*, that you should have them at hand, to advise with, in the Diseases and Dangers of your *Souls*, as you do with *Physicians*, in the Diseases and Dangers of the *Body*. Lay by all sinful Bashfulness, and trust not your selves any longer with your own Skill, but go to them that God hath set in *Office* over you, for such Uses as these, and tell them your *Case*: This is God's way; and he will bless his own *Ordinance*: Melancholy, and passionate distempered Persons, are not fit Judges of their own Condition. In this Case you must distrust your own *Understanding*, and be not Self-conceited, and stick not obstinately to every Fancy that comes into your Heads, but in the sence of your weakness, rely upon the guidance of your *faithful Overseers*, 'till your Distempers are overcome, and you are made more capable of discerning for your selves.

5. You are further here to be informed, that it is not for it self, that *Sorrow* and *Tears* are so desirable; but as they are Expressions of a gracious Temper of the *Will*, and as they help on the *Ends* that *Humiliation* is appointed to. And therefore you may hence learn in what sort you must seek after it. 1. You must not place the chief part of your *Religion* in it, as if it were a Life of meer *Sorrow*, that we are called to by the *Gospel*. But you must make it a Servant to your *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Joy* in the *Holy Ghost*, and other Graces. As the use of the Needle is but to make way for the Thred, and then it is the Thred, and not the Needle that makes the Seam: So much of our *Sorrow* is but to prepare for *Faith* and *Love*, and these are they that close the *Soul* with *Christ*. It is therefore a sore Mistake of some, that are very apprehen-

five of their want of *Sorrow*, but little of their want of *Faith* or *Love*: And that pray and strive to break their *Hearts*, or weep for Sin, but not much for those higher *Graces*, which it tendeth to. One must be done, and not the other left undone.

2. As Tears are the Expressions of the Heart, so those are the most kindly and sincere, which voluntarily flow from the inward feeling of the Evil that we lament; if you could weep never so much, meerly because you think that Tears are in themselves necessary, and had not within the hatred of Sin, and sence of its vile and killing nature; this were not true *Humiliation* at all. And if the *Heart* be humbled before the *Lord*, it is not the want of Tears that will cause him to despise it. Some are so backward to weep by Nature, that they cannot weep for any outward thing, no not for the loss of the dearest Friend, when yet they would have done ten times more to redeem his Life, than some that have Tears at will. *Groans* are as sure Expressions of *Sorrow* as *Tears*, with such as these. And the hearty rejecting and detestation of Sin, is yet a better Evidence than either. But where Men have naturally a weeping Disposition, which they can manifest about Crosses in the World, and yet cannot shed a Tear for Sin, there the Case is the most suspicious.

3. The principal Cause why you must strive for *deeper Sorrow* is, that you may obtain the *Ends* of that Sorrow; that Sin may be more odious to you, and more effectually mortified; that *Self* may be taken down, and *Christ* may be valued, and desired, and exalted, and that you may be fitted for a *Holy Communion with God* for the time to come, and saved from *Pride*, and kept in watchfulness.

6. From this that was last said, you have a *Rule*, by which you may certainly discern, what measure of *Humiliation* it is that must be had. It must go so deep as to undermine our *Pride*, and so far the Heart must

must needs be broken, as is necessary to break the Heart of Sin, and carnal Self. If this be not done, here's nothing done, tho' you weep out your Eyes. You must be brought so low, that the *Blood of Christ*, and the *Favour of God*, may be more precious in your Eyes than all the World, and in your very Hearts preferred before it: And then you may be sure that your *Humiliation is sincere*, whether you have Tears or none.

7. From hence also you may see, that you must take heed of ascribing to your own *Humiliation* any part of the Office and Honour of *Christ*: Think not that you can satisfie the Justice of the Law, or merit any thing of *God* by the worth of your Sorrows, tho' you should weep even *Tears of Blood*. It is not true *Humiliation* if it consist not in the sence and acknowledgment of your unworthiness, and desert of Condemnation; and if it do not lead you to look out for Pardon and Life from *Christ*, as being lost and wholly insufficient for your selves. And therefore it would be a plain contradiction, if true *Humiliation* should be taken as *Satisfaction*, or *Merit*, or trusted on instead of *Christ*.

IV. Having thus far opened the Nature and Reasons of true *Humiliation*, I conclude with that Advice which I principally here intended: Refuse not to be throughly and deeply humbled. Be not weary of the humbling Workings of the *Spirit*. *Grief* is an unwelcome Guest to Nature; but Grace can see Reason to bid it welcome. Grace is ingenious, and cannot look back on so great unkindness, with unwillingness to mourn over it, *Zech.* 12. 10. There is somewhat of *God* in *Godly Sorrow*, and therefore the *Soul* consenteth to it, and seeketh for it, and calls it in: Yea, and is grieved that it can grieve no more. Not that Sorrow, as Sorrow, is desirable; but as a necessary Consequent of our grievous sinning, and a necessary

Antecedent of our further recovery: As we may submit to *Death* it self, with a cheerful willingness, because it is sanctified to be the passage into *Glory*, how dreadful soever it be to Nature in it self; so much more may we submit to *Humiliation*, and *Brokenness of Heart*, with a holy willingness, because it is sanctified to be the entrance into the State of Grace. Consider for your Satisfaction, of these following Things.

1. The main Brunt of your Sorrows will be but in the beginning: And when once you are setled in a *holy Course*, you will find more *Peace* and *Comfort*, than ever you could have had in any other way. I know if you will be meddling with Sin again, it will in its measure breed *Sorrow* again. But a godly Life, is a Life of *Uprightness*, and *Conversion* is a departing from Sin, and consequently a departing from the Cause of Sorrows. And can you not bear such a Sorrow for a little while?

2. Consider but whence you are coming? Is it not out of a State of Wrath? And where have you been all this while? Was it not in the Power of Satan? And what have you been doing all your Lives? Hath it not been the Drudgery of Sin, and the offending of your Lord, and the destroying of your selves? And is it meet, is it reasonable, is it ingenious, for you to come out of such a Case, without lamentation that you staid in it so long?

3. Consider also, that it is necessary to your own *Recovery* and *Salvation*. Do you think to take so dangerous a Surfeit, and then to be cured without a Vomit? You will endure for the Health of your *Bodies*, the bittrest Pills, and loathsomest Potions, the shortest Diet, and the letting out of your Blood; for you know that your Life lieth on it, and there is no Remedy. And should you not endure for the saving of your *Souls*, the bittrest Sorrows, the keenest Rebukes, the freest Confessions, and the most plentiful Tears? Sin will not set down at easier Rates; Self will

will not be conquered else: The Heart of it will not be broken, 'till *your* Hearts be broken. We know your Sorrows merit nothing, and make not God amends for your Sins; nor is it for want of sufficiency in the Blood of Christ that we require them. But it is part of the Fruit of his *Blood* upon your Souls. If his *Blood* do not melt and break your Hearts, you have no part in him. It becomes you to mourn over him whom you have pierced, *Zech.* 12. 10. And this Fruit of his *Blood*, is a Preparative to more. You may as well think of being saved without *Faith*, as without *Repentance* and *Humiliation*.

4. Consider so much as is bitter in it, is of your own preparation: You may thank your selves for it. Who was it that brought you to this necessity of Sorrow? Have you been all your Life-time surfeiting of the Creature, and causing your own Disease, and now will you grudge at the trouble of a Cure? Whom have you to blame and find fault with but your selves? Was it not you that sinned? Was it not you that laid in the Fuel of Sorrows, and sowed the Seeds of this *bitter Fruit*, and cherished the Cause of Trouble in your selves? *God* did not do this; it was you your selves. He doth but undo that which you have been doing. Grudge not therefore at your Physitian, if you must be Purged and let Blood, and Dieted strictly, but thank your selves for it, that have made it so necessary.

5. Consider also that you have a wise and tender Physician, that hath known what Sorrow and Grief is himself; for he was made for you a Man of Sorrows, *Isaiah* 53. 3. and therefore can pity those that be in Sorrow. He delighteth not in your Trouble, and Grief; but in your Cure, and After-Consolations. And therefore you may be sure that he will deal gently and moderately with you; and lay no more on you than is necessary for your good; nor give you any bitterer a Cup, than your Disease doth require. When he sheweth his greatest liking of the Contrite, it is

that he may revive their Hearts; and he professeth withal, that he will not contend for ever, nor be always wrath, *lest the Spirit should fail before him, and the Souls which he hath made*, Isaiah 57. 15, 16. He calls to him *the weary and heavy-laden*, that he may *give them ease*, Matth. 11. 28. He was sent to heal the Broken-hearted, to preach Deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of *sight to the blind*, and to set at liberty *them that are bruised*, Luke 4. 18. When he hath broken your Hearts, he will as tenderly bind them up, and as safely heal them as you can reasonably desire. Even his *Ministers* that labour to break your Hearts, and bring you low, even to the Dust, have no worse meaning in it, then to bring you to Christ, and Life, and Comfort; and tho' they are glad to see the weeping Eyes of their Hearers, and to hear their free Confessions and Lamentations, yet this is not because they take pleasure in your trouble, but because they foresee the saving Fruits of it, and know it to be necessary to your Everlasting Peace. You may read what their Thoughts are in the words of *Paul*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 9, 10, 11. *Now I rejoyce, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to Repentance: For ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly Sorrow worketh Repentance to Salvation, not to be repented of; but the Sorrow of the World worketh Death. For behold this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of your selves; yea, what indignation; yea, what fears; yea, what vehement desire; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge*, &c. Indeed neither Christ, nor his Ministers, have that fond and foolish love to you, and pity of you, as you have to your selves: They be not so tender of you, as to save you from the Sorrow which is needful to the saving of you from *Hell*. But they would not put you to any more than needs; nor have you taste a drop of the Vinegar and Gall, or shed one *Tear*, but what shall tend to *your Comfort and Salvation*.

6. Con-

6. Consider what Sorrows they be that these Sorrows do prevent, and what those suffer in *Hell*, that avoid this godly Sorrow on Earth. O Sirs, your *Repentance Sorrows* are *Joys* to those; yours have Hope, but theirs are quickned with Desperation; yours are small, and but a drop to their Ocean; yours are curing, but theirs are tormenting; yours are a *Father's Rod*, but theirs are the *Rack* and *Gallows*; yours are mix'd with Love, but theirs are unmixed, overwhelming them with Confusion; yours are short, but theirs are endless. And had you rather sorrow as they do, than as the godly do? Had you rather howl with *Devils* and *Rebels*, than weep with *Saints* and *Children*? Had you rather be broken in Hell by *Torments*, than on Earth by *Grace*? Is it not an unreasonable thing of you, to make such a stir at the Sorrow that must save you, when you remember what it would save you from, and what all must suffer that are not humbled here by *Grace*. O it is another kind of Sorrow that others are now enduring. Grudge not at the pricking of a Vein, when so many thousands are everlastingly bleeding at the Heart.

7. Consider, the more you are rightly humbled, the sweeter will *Christ* and all his Mercies be to you ever after while you live. One taste of the healing Love of *Christ*, will make you bless those Sorrows that prepared for it. The same *Christ* is not equally esteemed even by all that he will save: And had you not rather be emptied yet more of your selves, that you may be fuller of *Christ* hereafter? When you do but feel his Arms embracing you, and perceive him in that posture as the Prodigal's Father was, *Luke* 15.20. you will thank that Sorrow that fitted you for his Arms.

8. If you be throughly humbled, you will walk the more safely all your Days, *if other things correspond*. It will make you hate the Sin you smarted by, and fly the Occasions of that which cost you once so dear.

9. The Sin of *Pride* it one of the moſt mortal *damning Sins* in the World; and that which thouſands of Profeſſors do miſcarry by. And *Humiliation* is moſt directly contrary to this: And therefore muſt needs be an amiable and neceſſary thing. It is worth all the Sorrow that a hundred Men endure here, to be ſaved from this dangerous Sin of *Pride*.

10. A through *Humiliation* is uſually a ſign of the greater *Exaltation* to come after. *For thoſe that humble themſelves ſhall be exalted, and thoſe that exalt themſelves ſhall be brought low*, Luke 14. 11. *Humble your ſelves therefore under the mighty hand of God, and he ſhall lift you up*, 1 Pet. 5. 5. The higher you mean to build, the deeper you will dig to lay the Foundation. Your Conſolations are like to be greater, as your Sorrows have been greater; you may be free from thoſe Doubts that follow others all their Days, leſt they were never truly humbled. You need not be ſtill queſtioning, or pulling up your Foundations, as if you were to begin again. It is a ſign that you are intended to greater Employments (if other things concur.) *Paul* muſt be laid exceeding low in his *Converſion*, that he might be the fitter as a choſen Veſſel, to bear Chriſt's Name among the Gentiles.

Lay all this now together Sirs, and conſider what cauſe you have to cheriſh the *Humbling Works of Grace*, and not to quench them. When your Hearts begin to be afflicted for Sin, go not among fooliſh and merry Companions, to drink or laugh it away: Drive it not out of your Minds, as unkindly, as if it came to do you hurt; but get alone, and conſider of the matter, and on your Knees in ſecret, beſeech the *Lord* to follow it home, and break your Hearts, and make you meet for his healing Conſolations, and not to leave you in this *Red Sea*, but to bring you through, and put the Songs of Praiſe into your Mouths.

Direct.

Direct. V. Having thus directed you about your *humiliation*, the next Direction which I would offer you, that you may not miscarry in the Work of *Conversion*, is this: *See that you close with the Lord Jesus Christ, understandingly, heartily, and entirely as he is revealed, and offered to you in the Gospel.* In this your *Christianity* doth consist, upon this your *Justification*, and *Salvation* lie. This is the Summ of your *Conversion*; and the very Heart of the New Creature. The rest is all but the Preparatives to this, or the Fruits of this. *Christ* is the end and the fulfilling of the *Law*; the substance of the *Gospel*; the way to the *Father*; the life, the help, the hope of the *Believer*. If you know not him, you *know* nothing; if you possess not him, you *have* nothing; and if you are out of him, you *can do* nothing that hath a Promise of *Salvation*. And therefore I shall distinctly (tho' briefly) tell you what it is to *close with Christ, understandingly, heartily, and entirely, as he is offered in the Gospel.*

And 1. That you may close with Christ *Understandingly*, you must look to these things. 1. That you understand who *Christ* is, as in his Person and his Offices. 2. That you understand the *Reason* of his Undertaking. 3. That you understand what it is that he hath done and suffered for us. 4. That you understand the nature and worth of his Benefits, and what he *will* do for you. 5. That you understand the Terms on which he conveyeth these Benefits to Men; and what is the Nature, Extent, and Condition of his Promises. And 6. That you understand the *certain Truth* of all this.

For the first, you must understand, that *Jesus Christ* hath two Natures in one Person; that he is both *God and Man*: As he is *God*, he is of the same Substance with his *Father*, and one in Essence with him; the Second Person in the *Blessed Trinity*; the *Word of God*; the only begotten *Son* of the *Father*; Eter-

Eternal, *Incomprehenſible*, and *Infinite*. As *Man*, he hath a true *Humane Soul* and *Body* as Men have; ſo that his *Godhead*, his *Humane Soul*, and his *Body*, are really diſtinct. This *Humane Nature* was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt in the Virgin *Mary*, without Man, and born of her, and is ſo truly united to the *Divine Nature*, as that they are one Perſon: Not that the *Godhead* is turned into the *Manhood*, nor the *Manhood* into the *Godhead*; but the *Godhead* hath taken the *Manhood* into *Perſonal* Unity with it ſelf. This was not from Eternity, but when Man had ſinned, and had loſt himſelf, and needed a *Redeemer*. By reaſon of his *miraculous Conception*, he was free from all *Original Sin*, being holy, harmleſs, and undefiled. His *Perſon* and *Natures*, were fit for his Office; which was to be *Mediator* between God and Man, to make Reconciliation, and recover us to God. Had he not been God, but meer Man, his Dignity would not have been ſufficient for ſuch an Interpoſition, nor his Obedience or Sufferings, of any ſuch value, as to be the Price of our *Redemption*: Nor could he have born our Burden, or conquered Death, and riſen again, and overcome the Prince of Death, the Devil; nor have ruled his *Church*, and preſerved, and ſanctified them, and proſpered his Cauſe, and ſubdued his Enemies, nor effectually interceded with the Father, nor judged the World, or raiſed the Dead, and done the Work of a perfect *Saviour*. Nor was the Angelical Nature ſufficient for this Office. Had he not been Man, he had not been near enough to us, to have ſuffered in our ſtead, and taught us by his Doctrine, and given us his Example, nor could he have ſuffered, or died for us: For God cannot die or ſuffer. As he is *God*, he is One in Nature with the Father; and as he is *Man*, he is One in Nature with us: And therefore is fit to mediate for us; and in him we are brought thus nigh to God. To this Office of the *Mediator*, there are many Acts belonging, from whence it hath *ſeveral Denominations*; of which more anon. So much of *Chriſt's Perſon*.

2. The

2. The next thing that you must understand, is, the *Reasons and Ends* of his Undertaking; which though we are not able fully to comprehend (nor the Reason of any of the *works of God,*) yet must we observe so much as is revealed. And these following Ends or Reasons of this work, do shew themselves clearly in the Scripture, and in the event.

1. One is, *The Demonstration of Gods justice, as he is Governour of the world according to the Law of Nature.* He made *man* a rational and a voluntary *Agent*, capable of *Good* or *Evil*, with *Desires* and *Hopes* of the *Good*, and fears of the *Evil*; and so to be ruled according to his Nature. He made for him a Law that Revealed *Good* and *Evil*, with Promises to move him by *Desire*, and *Hope*, and with Threatnings to drive him by necessary Fear. By these engins God resolved to govern mankind. This Law was the Rule of mans *Duty* and of his *Receivings*, or of *Gods Judgement*: According to this Law, the world was to be Governed by *God*. His Governing Justice consisteth in giving all their *Due*, according to his Law: At least so far as that the end of the Law may be attained, that is, the honour of the Law-giver preserved, transgression made odious by the terror of penalty, and obedience made honourable by its fruits of impunity and reward: Otherwise the Law would not have deterred effectually from *Evil*, nor encouraged to *Good*, especially to so much as Creatures must go through for the Crown of Life: And so the Law would have been no fit Instrument for the Government of the world; that is, the Law would have been no Law. But this the *Wise* and *Righteous God* would not be guilty of, of making a Law that was no Law; and was unmeet for the ends, to which he made it; which was *essential* to it as a Law. There was no way to avoid this intolerable consequent when man had sinned, but *strict execution* of the Law, or by *sufficient Satisfaction* instead of such an Execution. The Execution would have destroyed the Common-wealth, even the whole inferior world at least,

least,

the reasonable Creature who was the Subject. The *Wisdom*, and *Love*, and *Mercy* of *God* would not give way to this, that the world should be destroyed so soon after it was made, and man left remediless in everlasting *Misery*: *Satisfaction* therefore must be *the remedy*, *this must be such* as might be as fit to procure the *Ends of the Law as if* the *Law* it self had been *executed*, that is, as if the *offenders had* all *dyed* the *death that it did threaten*. It must therefore be a publick Demonstration of Justice, and of the odiousness of *Sin*, to the terrour and warning of sinners for the future: And this was done by *Jesus Christ*, when none else in *Heaven*, or *Earth* could do it: For it did as fully demonstrate the *Justice of God*, and preserved his honour, and the usefulness of his Law and *government*, that a Person so high and Glorious, and so dear to him, should suffer so much for *sin*, as if all the world had suffered for themselves. And thus God *made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. And thus *Christ hath Redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us*, Gal. 3. 13.

2. Hereby also God *Demonstrated the holiness of his Nature*; How much he hateth *sin*; and how unreconcilable he is to it; as light to darkness. As the Law and Judgements of God do proceed from his direct Nature and Will, so do they bear the Image of that perfection, and demonstrate it to the world. This therefore is the nobler End, and work of Christ in our redemption, to declare the *Holiness* and *perfection of God* in his *Nature and Will*, though the former (the declaring of his *Governing Justice*) be the nearer End. If the death of *Aarons* two sons, were such a Declaration *that God will be sanctified in all that draw neer him*, Lev. 10. 2, 3. If his Laws and present Judgements to declare him to be *a Holy and Jealous God*, *that will not forgive sin* (*without a valuable consideration, or satisfaction*) Jos. 24. 19. *how much more evidently is this declared in the death of Christ? If the Bethshemites cry out, Who is able to stand before his Holy Lord God?* 1. Sam. 6. 20. upon the death of 50070 men; how much more may the

the guilty Soul say so when he thinks on the *Crucified Son of God?* As it is the end of *Gods execution on transgressors*, that *the Lord may be exalted in Judgement, and God that is Holy may be Sanctified in Righteousness*, Isa. 5. 16. so was it his End in the *Sacrifice of his Son.*

3. Another End of our Redemption by *Christ*, is the *Demonstration of the Infinite Wisdom of God.* His *Wisdom* in the preventing the ruine of the late created world; that it might not be said that *sin* and *Satan* had frustrated him of the Glory of his *Creation*, and destroyed it almost as soon as he had made it: Yea in getting an advantage by the malice of his enemies, for the more admirable attainment of the Ends of his *Law* and the Glorifying of his *Governing Attributes*: He would not have made man a *free Agent*, and left him in the hand of his own will, and suffered him to sin, if his *Wisdom* had not known how to *secure* his own *Interest* and *Honour* to the full. And so also in the œconomy and admirable frame of his Gracious Sapiential Government by Christ, the manifold Wisdom of God doth shine forth, *Eph.* 3. 9, 10. As the wonderful structure of *Heaven* and *Earth*, and every part of this Natural frame, doth gloriously reveal the Wisdom of the *Creator*; so the wonderful Contrivance of our *Redemption* by *Christ*, and the Reparation of the world by him, and the Moral frame of this Evangelical dispensation, doth wonderfully demonstrate the *Wisdom* of the *Redeemer.* And as the observation of our Natures may give us Cause to say with *David*, *Psal.* 139. 14. *I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made*; So the observation of our new Natures and condition, may well cause us to say, *I will praise thee: for I am graciously and wonderfully Redeemed, marvellous are thy works, and that my Soul knoweth right well.* As nature may teach us to admire the frame of *Nature*; so *Grace* will teach us to admire the frame of *Grace*; and to see the beauty of its several parts, and much more of the *whole* where all the parts are orderly composed.

4. Yea

4. Yea *the very Power of God is demonstrated in Christ.* And therefore he is called, 1. *Cor.* 1. 24. *The Power of God, and the wisdom of God*: not only *formally*, because Christ himself is the *Wise and Powerful God*; not only *Efficiently* because God doth *exercise his Power* and Wisdom, by his Son in *Creation*, *Redemption*, and *Government*; but also *Effectually* and *Objectively*, as Christ is the great and most admirable *Demonstration* of the *Power and Wisdom of God* in the world.

What work transcendeth the incomprehensible Miracle of the *Incarnation*? That God should assume the nature of man into *personal Union*? The Creation of the *Sun* is no greater a work of *Power*, then the *Incarnation*, and sending of the *Son of God*, the Intellectual Sun, the *Light* of the world, *That Living Light, that Lighteth every one that cometh into the world: though yet the darkness comprehendeth not his Light*, John 1. 4, 6, 9. What was he but the *living visible Power of God*, when he healed all diseases, cast out Devils, raised the dead, and rose from the dead himself, and ascended into *Glory*, and sent down the *Holy Spirit* on his *Church*! enduing them with *Power* from on high. *Acts* 1. 8, *Luke* 24. 49. when he was on Earth, he was *Anointed with the Holy Ghost, and with Power, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil*, Acts 10. 38. Being dead, *he was declared to be the Son of God with Power, by the Resurrection from the dead*, Rom. 1. 4. *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive*, Eph. 4. 8. Yea he filled his servants with power, *Acts.* 6. 8. Even such as was admired and desired by the ungodly, *Act.* 8. 19. He being *the brightness of Gods Glory, and the express Image of his Person, and upholding all things by the Word of his Power, when he had by himself purged our sins, he sate down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better then the Angels as he hath by Inheritance obtained a more excellent Name then they*, Heb. 1. 3, 4. As Christ therefore in his *Glorified Humanity* united to the *Godhead*, is far more excellent then the *Angels of God*, and more

glorious

glorious then the *Sun*, so is the *Power* of God more abundantly demonstrated in him, then in the *Sun*, or the *Angels*, or any other Creature. The Illuminated to know this *and what is the exceeding greatness of his Power, to us ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the Celestials, far above all Principality and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is his Body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all*, Ephes. 1. 19. 20, 21, 22, 23.

Besides this, even in the *Works* of Christ for his Church, his Calling, and *Sanctifying* and *Ruling*, and *Preserving* them, his subduing their Enemies, and raising them from the Dead, and Glorifying them with himself how glorious is the very *Power* of *God* by his *Son*, 2 *Thes.* 1. 11. *Philip.* 3. 10. *Ephes.* 3. 7, 20, 2 *Pet.* 1. 3, 16. 1 *Cor.* 4. 20. *Ephes.* 6. 10. 1 *Cor.* 15. 43. 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. And therefore his Gospel may well be called *The Power of God to Salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. Which hath been the Instrument of his *Power* in doing such wonderful works in the world, 1 *Cor.* 1. 18. and 2. 5, 2. *Cor.* 6. 7 2 *Cor.* 13. 3, 4.

5. But the most sweet and conspicuous *End* of our *Redemption*, was the Demonstration *of Gods Love and Mercy* to Man kind, and that he might *make known the Riches of his Glory on the vessels of Mercy, prepared unto Glory*, Rom. 9. 23. Of all Gods *Attributes* there is none shineth more illustriously in the work of our *Redemption* then *Love and Mercy*. *Hereby perceive we the Love of God because he lay down his Life for us*, 1 John 3. 16. By the *Creation*, and *Sustentation* of us we perceive the Love of God, but more abundantly by our *Redemption*. *In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent*

sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him, 1 Joh. 4. 9. O wonderful Love which condescendeth to such Rebels, and embraceth such unworthy and polluted sinners, and pittyeth them even in their *blood*! Even after we had sold our selves to *Satan*, and cast away the *Mercies* of our *Creation*, and had all *come short of the Glory of God*, and were sentenced to death, and ready for the Execution, then did this wonderful Love step in, and rescue and recover us. Not staying till we repented and cryed for Mercy, and cast our selves at his feet; but seeking us in the Wilderness, and finding us before we felt that we were lost, and being found of us before we sought him, and beginning to us in the depth of our Misery. *Herein is Love, not that we Loved God, but that he Loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*, 1 John 4, 10. Though God Love us not in our sin, and misery before our *Conversion*, so far as in that state to *Justifie* us, and *Adopt* us, and take pleasure in us, or have Communion with us in the Spirit, yet doth he so far Love us in that state, as to *Redeem* us by the *Blood of Christ*, and tender us his *Salvation*, and to bring in his chosen effectually to entertain his offer. And thus *the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given to us: for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ dyed for the ungodly: and God commended his Love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ dyed for us*, Rom. 6. 9, 8. *Greater Love hath no man then this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*, John 15. 13. What was the *Sin of God*, but *Love Incarnate*? *Love* born of a Virgin? *Love* coming down from *Heaven* to *Earth*, and walking in flesh among the miserable, seeking and saving that which was lost: was it not *Love* that spoke those words of life, those comfortable promises, those necessary precepts, those gracious encouragements which the *Gospel* doth abound with? Was it not *Love* it self, that went preaching *Salvation* to the *sons of death*, and deliverance to the Captives, and offered

offered to bind up the broken *hearts*, *Luke* 4. 18? Was it not *Love* that invited the weary and heavy laden, *Matthew* 11.28.? And that sent even to *the highwayes, and the hedges to compel men to come in that his house might be filled*, Matth. 22. 9, 10. Luke 14. 23. Was it not *Love* it self that went up and down *healing* and *doing good*; that suffered them for whom he suffered to scorn him, and spit upon him, and *buffet* him and *condemn* him? that being *reviled, reviled not again: that gave his life an offering for sin*, and dyed, and prayed for them that murdered him? No wonder if the *Gospel* be it that teacheth us to call *God* by the name of *Love* it self, 1 *John* 4.8. For it is the *Gospel* that hath most fully *revealed* him to be so. No wonder if the *Gospel* do so frequently and importunately require us to *Love one another*, and even to lay down our lives for *Christ*, and for one another, when it hath given us such a ground and motive, and president for our *Love*. He that seeth the true face of *Redemption*, and understandeth and savoureth the *Gospel* and the *Grace of Christ*, must needs see most cogent *Reasons* for such duties, 1 *John* 4.7,8,9,10,11, 12. *Beloved, let us Love one another, for Love is of God: and every one that Loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: he that Loveth not knoweth not God, for God is Love. If God so Loved us, we ought also to Love one another —— If we love one another, God dwelleth in us* —— so 1. *John*. 3.10, 14, 16, 17, 18. No *wonder* if by this *Love* we know that we are translated from *death to life*; and if by it the Children of *God* be known from the Children of the *Devil*, 1 *John* 3. 10, 11, 14. For *Love* is the very *Nature* and *Image* of our Father. No wonder if this be the *New Commandment*, which had newly such a powerful motive, and president: and no wonder if it be the great distinguishing Character, by which all men shall *know* that we are the *Disciples of Christ*, *John* 13. 35. When he had set us such a Copy, and taught us this Lesson by such effectual means; writing it out for us in lines of *Blood*, even of his own most *precious Blood*, and shedding it abroad in our hearts by the *Holy Ghost*.

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But if we should come down to the particular benefits of *Christs death*, and see what Love is manifested in them, even in our *Calling*, our *Justification*, our *Adoption*, or *Sanctification*, our *Preservation*, and our *everlasting Glorification*, we should find our selves in an Ocean that hath neither banks nor bottom; and when we have fathomed as far as we can, we must be contented to stand and admire it, and to say with the Beloved Apostle, *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!* 1 John 3. 1.

And this is the blessed imployment of the *Saints*, which they are called to by the *Gospel*, to live in the participation, and consideration and admiration of, this *wonderous Love, that Christ may dwell in their hearts by Faith, and so being rooted and grounded in Love, they may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God*, Ephes. 3. 17, 18, 19. *And withal, to be followers of God as dear Children, and walk in Love as Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour*, Ephes. 5. 1, 2. *And to love without dissimulation*, Rom 12. 9, 10. *Even from a pure heart frequently*, 1 Pet. 1. 22. *That we love as brethren, being compassionate, pitiful, and courteous; not rendring evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing; knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing*, 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9. *And that we keep our selves in the Love of God*, Jud. 21. *that nothing may be able to separate us from it*, Rom. 8. 35, 36, 37. And if we thus imitate our Heavenly pattern, *the God of Love and Peace will be with us*, 2 Cor. 13. 11. And thus I have shewed you the principal Ends of the undertaking of Christ in the work of our *Redemption*, especially as they are attained directly by his *Cross*, and *Resurrection*.

6. Another end also is apparent in the *Scripture*; which is *the Glorifying of Gods Rewarding Justice, together*

ther with his Mercy in the Salvation of his Elect. This *End* he partly attaineth *here* (for God hath his *Ends* continually:) In this Life his Servants have much of his Mercy; and the beginnings of their *Reward* in the beginning of their *Salvation:* But the fulness is hereafter in their *Glorification.* All his Promises he performeth in their Seasons. Even in the present Pardon of our Sins, he honoureth his *Faithfulness* and *Justice*, 1 John 1. 9. His *Faitufulness* in making good his Promise, and his *Justice* in *rewarding* the Performers of the Condition, and giving what his Promise had made their due; that so Men may even here in part discern between the *Righteous* and the *Wicked*; between him that *serveth God, and him that serveth him not*; *while they see God esteem of his People as his Jewels, and spare them as a Man spareth his Son that serveth him*, Mal. 3. 17, 18. *The King of Zion is just, having Salvation*, Zech. 9. 9. *The Righteousness of God is manifested* in our Justification, *Rom.* 3. 21, 22. *Even the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God; being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness: For the remission of Sins that are past, thro' the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his Righteousness; that he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus*, Rom. 3. 25, 26.

But it is most eminently at *Judgment*, and in the World to come, that this Remunerative *Justice* with Mercy will be *glorified: When Christ shall come* (purposely) *to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe* (not only in himself, but in them:) and that *because they were Believers*, 2 Thess. 1. 10. When *we have fought the good Fight, and finished our Course, and kept the Faith, we shall find that there is laid up for us a Crown of Righteousness, which*

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the Lord the righteous Judge shall give us, and all that love his appearing at that day, 2 Tim. 4. 8. He will justifie and applaud them before all the World, yea and adjudge them to *everlasting Life*, with a *Well done, good and faithful Servant; enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord; I will make thee Ruler over many things; even because they had been faithful in a little*, Luke 19. 17. Mat. 25. 21, 23. Because they shewed their Love to him in his Members, he will say to them, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World*, Mat. 25. 34, 35, 36. He that now commandeth us to *say to the righteous, It shall be well with him*, Isa. 3. 10. Will in *righteousness cause it then to be well with him. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father, Matth.* 13. 43. And the Righteousness and Mercy of their Father, shall as conspicuously and gloriously shine in them. For it is a day appointed for the *Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, who will render to every Man according to his Deeds*, Rom. 2. 5, 6. *The present Faith and Patience of the Saints in all the Persecutions and Tribulations which they endure, is a manifest Token of the righteous Judgment of God, that they may be accounted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which they suffer: It being a righteous thing with God to recompence Tribulation to them that trouble us, and to us that are troubled, rest with the Saints*, 2 Thess. 1. 5, 6, 7. *For the righteous Lord loveth Righteousness*, Psal. 11. 7. *And in Righteousness will he judge the World*, Acts 17. 31. Rev. 19. 11. And therefore *in the keeping of his Word there is a great Reward*, Psal. 19. 11. *Yea a Cup of Water given in love to him, shall not be unrewarded*, Matth. 10. 41, 42. *To him that soweth Righteousness shall be a sure Reward*, Prov. 11. 18. If in this Life Men are forc'd to say, *Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous: Verily there is a God that judgeth in the Earth*, Psal. 58. 11. Much more when we receive the *Reward of the Inheritance*, Col. 3. 24. This causeth the Saints to forsake the Pleasures of Sin, because

because they have *respect to the Recompence of Reward*, *Heb.* 11. 26. This is it that maketh them *rejoyce and be exceeding glad in their Persecutions, because that great is their Reward in Heaven:* And therefore it is that they *cast not away their Confidence, because it hath great Recompence of Reward*, Heb. 10. 25. If we *let no Man beguile us of our Reward*, Col. 2. 18. And if we *look to our selves, that we lose not those things that we have wrought, we shall receive a full Reward*, 2 Joh. 8. For the Lord hath said, *Behold I come quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give every Man according as his work shall be*, Rev. 22. 12.

7. Another *End* of Christ's undertaking in this *blessed Work*, is, *the Complacency and Glory of God in the Love, and Praise, and Service of his Redeemed Ones*; in some measure here, but in perfection when they are perfected. Sin had made us unserviceable to *God*; and *Christ* bringeth us back into a fitness for his Service. He disposeth us Godward by *Faith* and *Love*; and he hath *redeemed us from our iniquity, and purifieth to himself a peculiar People zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. *To which he createth us, that we should walk in them*, Eph. 2. 10. *And with such Sacrifices God is well pleased*, Heb. 13. 16. Phil. 4. 18. *The Blood of the Covenant* was therefore shed, *to make us perfect in every good work to do his will, who worketh in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight*, Heb. 13. 20, 21. And this must be our care, *to walk worthy of the Lord in all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work*, Col. 1. 10. *And then whatsoever we ask, we shall receive of him, because we keep his Commandment, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight*, 1 John 3. 22. See 1 Thes. 4. 1. Heb. 11. 6. Rom. 8. 8. 2 Tim. 2. 4. 1 Cor. 7. 32. Heb. 11. 5.

But principally when we are Glorified, and fitted by our perfection for the *Perfect Love*, and *Praises* of *God*, then will *God* perfectly take pleasure in us, and in our Love and *Praise* of *God*, then will *God* perfectly take pleasure in us, and in our Love and Praise.

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The *Glory* of the new *Jerusalem* and the *Harmony* of *everlasting Praise* and *Thanksgiving* will be his delight. *He will rejoyce over us with joy, he will rest in his Love; he will joy over us with singing,* Zeph. 3. 17.

8. Another end of Christ's undertaking this *blessed Work,* is *the everlasting Glory of God, which shall shine forth in the glorified Manhood of the Redeemer, and the everlasting Complacency that God will have in him, for his own perfection, and the Work that he hath wrought.*

Tho' Christ had no need to suffer for any Sin, or want of his own; yet was it his Personal Dignity, Dominion, and *Everlasting Glory,* as well as our *Salvation,* that was intended by him, and by the *Father* in this Work, and which he was to receive as the *Reward* of his Performances, *Rom.* 14. 7. *Phil.* 2. 8, 9, 10. *Mat.* 28. 18, 19. *Heb.* 1. 3, 4, 6. *Eph.* 12. 22. Nay, if we may make Comparisons, this seemeth the highest part of *God's End,* in the sending of his *Son.* As there is no part of all the *Works of God,* to be compared to the *Person* of the *Redeemer,* so consequently there is none in which the *Glory of God* will shine forth so admirably, and illustriously, as in Christ. If on Earth the heavenly Voice bear Witness that it was *in him that the Father was well pleased,* Mat. 3. 17. & 17. 5. & 12. 18. Which was uttered both at his *Baptism,* and his *Transfiguration,* when his Disciples saw a Glimpse of his *Glory,* and he was the *chosen Servant of God in whom his Soul delighted,* Isa. 42. 1. Much more is it apparent, that in his *Heavenly Glory* he will be the *Father's everlasting pleasure and delight:* And in him, and by him, and for the Work that he hath wrought, the Redeemed in Glory will honour him for ever, *Rev.* 5. 9. *He is the Head of the Body, the Church: The Beginning, the First-born from the Dead, that in all things he might have the preheminence: For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell,* Col. 1. 17, 18, 19. And therefore in him the *Glory of God* will shine in fulness, and he shall have the Preheminence

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n the *Father's everlasting Love.* When Christ prayed, John 12. 28. *Father glorifie thy Name*; he was answered by a Voice from *Heaven, I have glorified it, and will glorifie it again.* Even in the Son that thus desired it. He hath done it on Earth, and he will do it again more perfectly in Heaven. *He hath glorified the Son, that the Son also may glorifie him,* John 17. 1. As he *glorified his Father on Earth, and finished the Work which he gave him to do,* so the Father hath now *glorified him with himself,* that in his Glory he may be yet more glorified, *John* 17. 4, 5, 6. In his *Transfiguration* his *Face* did shine as the *Sun, John* 17. 2. And in his appearance to *Paul,* his shining Light did cast him *blindfold* and *trembling* on the Earth, *Acts* 9. 4, 6. It was *Stephen's* encouragement to the *suffering* of his Martyrdom, to see the *Glory of God,* and *Jesus* standing on *God's right hand,* Acts 7. 55, 56. When *John* saw him on the Lord's Day in the Spirit, he beheld *his Eyes as a Flame of Fire, and his Feet like burning Brass in the Furnace, and his Voice was as the Sound of many Waters, and in his Right-hand were the Stars, and out of his Mouth went a sharp two-edged Sword, and his Countenance was as the Sun that shineth in his strength,* Rev. 1. 14, 15, 16. His Voice also did proclaim his Glory, *I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the Keys of Hell and of Death,* verse 17, 18. It was the *Lord of Glory* that was crucified, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. *God was manifest in the Flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up into Glory,* 1 Tim. 3. 16. where he is *glorified* with the Father in the Praises of the Saints, *Rev.* 5. 12, 13. The Glory in the *Holy Mount* was great at the giving of the Law; but it was no Glory to that of the *Gospel-administration,* 2 Cor. 3. 7, 10. much more to that of the *glorified Redeemer* who hath *overcome,* and is set down with the Father in his Throne, *Rev.* 3. 21. Yea, the Glory that will be given to *God for ever,*

will be through *Jesus Christ*, Rom. 16. 17. And indeed it is a very great Question, Whether we shall immediately see the *Essence of God in Heaven*, or only see him in the *glorified Redeemer?* And whether *Christ* will not then be the *Mediator of our Fruition*, as he was here the *Mediator of Acquisition*. But certain we are, that *God* will be everlastingly pleased and glorified in the Person of the *Redeemer*, as well as in the *Church*, which is his Body.

9. And *reductively* it may be said to be *God's End* in this *blessed Work*, that he may *more fully demonstrate his Vindictive Justice, according to the Gospel, or Law of the Redeemer, upon them that finally reject his Grace* than it would have been manifested on the Terms of the Law of Creation on *Adam*, and his Off-spring. Tho' Christ *came not into the World*, (primarily) *to condemn the World, but that the World through him might be saved*; yet was it his purpose that Unbelievers that *love darkness rather than light*, should fall under the special Condemnation, *John* 3. 18, 19. And that they should not *see Life, but that the Wrath of God should abide upon them*, verse 36. God would not so much as permit them to reject his Salvation, but that he knows how he may be no loser by them: *He suffereth with much patience the Vessels of Wrath, to make his Wrath and Power known*, Rom. 9. 22. The Mouths of the Condemned will be utterly stopped, and they will be left speechless, when they are judged on Terms of Grace, much more than they would have been, if they had been judged only by the first Law; when they see *Christ* and *Heaven* that was offered them, and remember their wilful and obstinate Contempt of them, their own *Consciences* and *Tongues* shall justifie *God*, and confess that he is *Righteous* in the dreadfullest of his *Judgments*. *If the Word spoken by Angels was steadfast, and every Transgression and Disobedience received a just Recompence of Reward, how shall they escape that neglect so great Salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and then was confirmed*

y them that heard him, God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers Miracles and gifts of he Holy Ghost ?Heb. 2.3,4. And *if they escaped not, that refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not they scape that turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven: For our God is a consuming fire*, Heb 12.25,29. So much of he *Ends* of Christs undertaking in our *Redemption*.

In which you may see that there are divers things which Demonstrate the Glory of the forementioned *Attributes of God*, in this Gospel Dispensation. 1. It shineth forth in the *Person* of the *Redeemer* as he was on Earth, in his *Nature* and *wonderful Conception*, and his *perfections*. 2. And it also shineth forth in the *Actions* of his life, overcoming the world, and the Devil, and perfectly fulfilling the *Law of God*; So that the Image of his Father did shine forth in his *Conversation*. 3. And also in his *Death* and *sufferings* was the Father glorified, as I shewed before. And also in the most Wise and Holy frame of those *Laws* by which the Grace of the *Mediator* is conveyed, and the *Church* governed. 5. And by the *Image* of *God*, by the impress of those Laws on the Souls of his Saints, and by the holiness of their *lives*, the *Glory of God* is also demonstrated. 6. As also by the Justifying sentence of the Judge, and the *glorious Reward* bestowed on the Faithful. 7. And by the Condemning sentence and execution on the ungodly, in whom Vindictive Justice will be honoured. 8. And in the perfection of the Individual Saints, and their perfect Love and Praise. 9. And in the *Saints* as imbodyed in the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, the Glory of which will be the *Glory of God*. 10. And principally in the *Blessed Person* and Work of the *Redeemer*. In all these will *Gods Glory* shine forth for ever.

Quest. *But to whom is it that God doth thus Demonstrate his Glory* ?

Answ. 1. To the Saints in this life, in that degree as it suited to a *state of Grace*, and the condition of a travailer that lives by *Faith*. We are apt to look upward

ward, and long after fuller revelations of the *Heavenly Kingdom* and *Myſterie*, and marvail that God will not ſhew himſelf more fully to his *Saints* on *Earth*. Fain we would know more of *God*, and *Chriſt*, and the life to come, and it is oft matter of ſome temptation to us, that God doth not ſatisfie theſe deſires, but leaveth them in ſo much darkneſs, that are willing of his light. But this is becauſe we do not conſider how much of Glory conſiſteth in the light: and that *Grace* is more in the Deſires of it then in the poſſeſſion: and if we ſhould have as much of it as we deſire, it were but to bring down *Heaven* to *Earth*. Means muſt be ſuted to their ends. God will diſcover to us ſo much of his *Glory* as may quicken our deſires, and keep alive our hope, and patience, and endeavours; but not ſo much as ſhall ſatisfie us, and anſwer our expectations. For *Heaven* is not here. We muſt not carry our *Home* about with us, but travel towards, that we may reach it at the laſt.

2. God doth even now Demonſtrate the Glory of his forementioned *Attributes*, in the work of *Redemption*, not only to his *Saints*, but to the *Angels* of *Heaven*. The conſideration of this hath often ſatisfied me when I have been tempted to wonder at the work of *Redemption*, that that God ſhould ſo far condeſcend as to be incarnate, and make ſuch glorious diſcoveries of himſelf, and yet that ſo few in the world ſhould take notice of it, and he ſhould have from men ſo little of the honour that he ſeemeth by his preparations to expect. But the moſt part of the world did never once ſee the Glory that ſhineth to them in the *Redeemer*. But God hath another *world* beſides this, as other *Creatures* beſides man, in all likely-hood incomparably more numerous (perhaps thouſands for one) and certainly more excellent. And though Chriſt did not aſſume the *Nature of Angels*, and came not to *Redeem* them that needed no *Redeemer*, yet may the luſtre of this work of *Redemption* appear to the *Angels* more clearly then to man; and God may have a thouſand

fold

old more glory from them that are but the spectators and admirers, then from us in our present darkness, that are yet possessors. As we that are here on Earth, to look upon and admire the *Glory* of the *Sun*, which is as it were in another world, and out of our reach; so the *Angels* much more may gaze upon the *Glory of the Son of God*, and admire the *Lord* in the work of our *Redemption*, though they were not the *Redeemed ones*. So that unto *them* doth God shine forth by it in his excellencies.

Perhaps you'l say, *that cannot be: because this is but seeing him in a glass; when the Angels see him face to face, and immediately behold his blessed Essence: or else how can the Saints expect that beatifical Vision.* To which I answer first, that I am uncertain whether seeing face to face be an immediate intuition of the *Essence of God*, or only such a sight of his *Glory* in those emanations, that are as appropriated to the place or state of Bliss. *Gods Essence* is every where: but that Glory is not every where: And so I know not whether our present knowledge be not called *Enigmatical, and as in a glass*, comparatively to that Glory prepared for the Saints: But secondly, I answer, that certain I am that God is Demonstrated to his angels in the *Redeemer*, yea in the Church it self, which is the Subject of his Grace, and that they are both affected, and Imployed about us accordingly. He that *spoiled Principalities, and Powers and openly triumphed over them, and by death, overcame him that had the power of death.* Col. 2. 15. Heb. 2. 14. And had so much to do against the *evil Angels* as enemies, no doubt is joyfully observed by the *good Angels*. And he that is set so *far above Principalities, and Powers, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named in this world, or that which is to come*, Ephes. 1. 21. And is *gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God, Angels, and Authorities, and Powers being made subject to him*, (1 Pet. 3. 22.) *no doubt* is honoured and admired by *Angels*. And indeed it is expresly said, *Let all the Angels of God worship him*, Heb. 6. And

indeed it is expresly said, *Let all the Angels of God worship him*, Heb. 1. 6. And what are *they all but Ministring spirits sent forth to Minister for them who shall be heirs of Salvation?* Heb. 1. 14. And therefore sent forth by *Jesus Christ*, the *Lord of Saints*. Which makes some think that the title of *Angels* was *never* given to any of these *Spirits*, till the *Mediators* undertaking, and that it was only as they were his deputed messengers, or servants for the Ends of that undertaking. Sure we are, they attended his *birth* with their acclamations, and his *life* and *sufferings*, (as far as was meet) with their *service*: and that they are deputed to bear his servants in their hands, that they *dash* not their foot against a stone; that they are ascending, and descending, and are present with the *Churches* in their *Holy worship*: and that they rejoyce at the *Conversion* of one sinner: and that the *least* of Christs servants have their *Angels* beholding the face of God: and that the Law was given by their disposition or ordination; and they attend the *departing Souls of believers*; and that they contend against evil spirits for our good, and are encamped about us, and that they shall attend the *Lord* at his coming to *Judgment*, and be his glorious retinue and Instruments in the work; and that they are numbred with us, as members of the same Heavenly *Jerusalem*, and that we shall be like or equal to them, *Luke* 2. 14, 15. *Mark* 4. 11. *Luke* 22. 43. *Acts* 10. 6,7,22. *Psal.* 34.7. & 91.11. *Matth.* 13. 39, 4. & 16. 27. & 24. 31. & 25. 31. & 26. 53. *Luke* 16. 22. *Matth.* 18. 10. 2 *Thes.* 1. 7. *Luke* 20. 36. *Mark* 12. 25. *Acts* 7. 65. *Gal.* 3. 19. *Heb.* 12. 22. 2 *Pet.* 2. 11. *Luke* 15. 10. *Joh.* 1. 51. Yea men must be either confessed or denied, owned or disowned, before the *Angels*, *Luke* 12. 8, 9. See *Rev.* 19. 18. *Rev.* 3. 5. But if all this seem not sufficient to perswade you that the *Angels* are so far interessed in the affairs of *God* about the *Redeemed*, as to behold and admire him in this blessed work, take notice of the expres affirmations of the *Scriptures*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12.

12. *Which things the Angels desire to look into.* And why but to see and admire the *Wisdom*, and *Power*, and *Goodness*, and *Mercy*, and *Justice of God*, shining forth in the *Redeemer?* If this be not plain enough, mark well those words, *Eph.* 3. 10. *To the intent that now unto the Principalities, and Powers in Heavenly places, might be known by the Church, the manifold Wisdom of God.* You see here that the Church of the *Redeemed*, is that admirable *Looking-glass*, which God hath set up to this very intent, that his *Angels* may in it, or by it, behold the manifold *Wisdom of God*; yea and that upon the full Revelation of *Christ* by the *Gospel*, they saw that which did more fully inform, and illuminate them. No doubt but the very Work of *Creation*, yea of this inferior World, that are made for the Habitation and Use of Man, are far better known to *Angels* than to *Man:* For we know but little of what we daily see and use: And consequently it is by *Angels* more than by Men, that *God* is beheld, admired, and glorified in them. And if it be so in these Works of *Creation*, we may well say, it is so in the Works of *Redemption*.

3. But when you are *perfected* in Glory, then we *our selves* shall clearly see the Glory of this Mystery, and of God therein. As it is not till we come to Heaven, that we shall have the fullest *Benefits of Redemption*, so is it not till then, that we shall have the fullest *understanding* of it, and *God* have his fullest Praises for it. As we are here but sowing the Seed of our own Glory, which we must reap in the *everlasting fruition of God*; so God is here but sowing those Seeds of his Praise and Glory, which he will eternally reap by this *blessed Work*. Do not therefore judge of the Ends, and Fruits, of *Christ's Undertakings*, by what you see him attain on *Earth*, but by what he shall attain in *Heaven*, when he hath fully seen the Travail of his *Soul*, to his Satisfaction, and hath presented the whole *Church* without spot unto God, and when the glorious Marriage of the Lamb, with the heavenly

Jerusalem is solemnized, and the Kingdom delivered up to the Father, *Isa.* 53. 11. *Eph.* 5. 27. *Rev.* 19. 7. 1 *Cor.* 15. 24. It will be another manner of *conceiving* which we shall have in *Heaven* of this *blessed Work*, when we see the Face of our *glorified Lord*, and fully possess the Fruits of his *Redemption*, then this is that we have now by our weak believing. We shall then have another manner of sight of the *Wisdom*, and *Power*, and *Love*, and *Justice*, that appear to Man, in the *Face of Christ*, than now we have.

4. Yea, the tormenting Discoveries of the Glory of *Redemption*, to the condemned Rejectors of it, shall also contribute to the *Glory of God*.

You see then that this Work hath most *glorious Ends*, which I have mentioned the more largely, both to *remove their Temptations*, that are apt to think that it *was an unnecessary thing*, and therefore the less regardable, and *to teach Men the true value of it, by shewing them the true Ends*.

For the *former*, I say, there was no necessity that God should make the World, and reveal his *Power*, and *Wisdom*, and *Goodness*, in this excellent Frame, but what did suppose the free *Will of God*, the *Original Cause*. Will you therefore say, that the *Creation* is vain; and undervalue God's admirable Works in which he thus revealeth himself to the *intellectual Creatures?* So here; we confess that there could be no necessity of *Redemption*, but what was originally derived from the *Will of God*, (tho' a necessity *ad finem* there was, from the Constitution of Things, upon supposition of what went before the Undertaking.) But yet shall we undervalue so glorious a Work, in which the *Divine Perfections* do so fully reveal themselves to the World?

And I say the more of this, because I do observe that its the not apprehending the high and excellent Ends of *Redemption*, that makes it so much slighted, and consequently tempteth many to *Infidelity*. For the *Ends* and *Uses* do set the Value on the Means. That

That is of little worth, that is to little purpose, and doth but little good. If Men understood more the Ends of *Redemption*, and how much of God doth shine forth in the World, in the *Person*, and *Life*, and *Laws*, and *Works* of the *Son of God*, they would then live in the admiration of it, and be always searching, and prying into it, and desire to know nothing but *God* in *Christ crucified*, and account all things else but as loss and dung for this excellent Knowledge: But alas, the most do scarce discern any higher Ends of Christ, or other use of him, than to *save* themselves from *Hell*, and for want of *Faith*, and through *Humiliation*, they have but little sence of that: And therefore no wonder if the *Redeemer* be neglected, and *God* denied the Honour of the Work.

So much of this Second Point, the *Reasons*, and *Ends* of *Christ's undertaking*. I shall purposely be shorter on the rest.

3. The Third Point to be understood concerning our *Redeemer*, is, *What he hath done and suffered for Mankind, and wherein his Redeeming Work consisted, both as to the general and the special part.* Should I stand on these at large, I must needs be Voluminous; and therefore I shall but briefly recite them for your remembrance.

1. The first thing that *Christ* did for the *saving* of the *World*, was his interposing between *offending Man*, and the *Wrath of God*; and so preserving the World from that Destruction, which the execution of the violated Law would have procured; undertaking then to become the Seed of the Women, and so to break the Serpent's Head; and revealing this *Grace* by slow degrees, till the time of his coming.

And then when the fulness of time was come, he was made Man, being conceived by the *Holy Ghost*, and born of the Virgin *Mary*, and so the *Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among Men, who beheld his Glory as the Glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of*

Grace and Truth, John 1. 14. Thus God was *manifested* to Men in the Flesh, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16.

3. And as he was perfectly *holy* in his Nature without any stain or guilt of *Original Sin*; so was he perfectly holy in his Life, and never broke the least Command of God in thought, word, or deed. Never could any convince him of sin, *John* 8. 46. He fulfilled the Law of Nature, which all the World was under, and the Mosaical Law which the Jews were under, and the special Law that was given to himself as Mediator, and was common to no other Creature in the World.

And thus he performed these excellent Works. 1. By the fulfilling of all Righteousness, he pleased the Father, always accomplishing his Will; and so did much of the Work of a *Saviour*, in meriting for us, *Mat.* 3. 15. & 5. 17. *John* 8. 29. *Mat.* 12. 18. & 17. 5. *Rom.* 5. 19. *For such an High-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*, Heb. 7. 26.

2. He hath conquered the Tempter that conquered us. And therefore did he purposely yield himself to such sore Temptations, *Mat.* 4. that his *Victory* might be *glorious*, and the Second *Adam* might overcome him that had overcome the first. And thus he hath done much, to the Rescue of the Captivated.

3. Hereby also he hath overcome the World, which overcame the first *Adam*, and his Posterity; he trampled upon its seeming Glory; he neglected and despised its Baits and Allurements; he went through all its cruel Persecutions, and Oppositions: So that the World now as well as the Devil, are conquered things. By which he hath made way for the Victory of his Followers, and given them ground of great encouragement, Joh. 16. 33. *Be of good cheer, I have overcome the World.* Yea, I may say, in a sort, he hath overcome the Flesh also. For tho' Christ had no *corrupt Flesh* as we have to contend with, yet had he a

Natural

Natural and Sensitive Appetite, which the Command of God did forbid him to fulfil. And therefore when innocent Nature desired that the Cup might pass from him, and abhor Death by a simple *Averseness*; yet *perfect Holiness* permitted not this to proceed to a *Refusal* by the comparing *Intellect, and refusing, or choosing Will*; but saith, *Not my Will, but thine be done.* And when Christ was *hungry* and *weary*, the desire of Food and Rest by the Sensitive Appetite, was no Sin: But when the Work of *God* forbad the fulfilling of such desires, he still denied them.

4. Hereby also he hath set us a *perfect Copy and Pattern* of *Obedience*, and is become our Example, whom we must endeavour to imitate. For he knew that it is the most effectual teaching, to do it by words and deeds together. It is a great help to us, when we do not only hear his Voice, but see also which way he hath gone before us. When he saith, *Learn of me*, he directs us, not only to his words, but to himself, who was *meek and lowly*, Mat. 11. 28.

5. Moreover Christ received of the Father fulness of the *Spirit* and *Power*, for the benefit of the *Redeemed*; that he might be meet to be the *Head*, and the Treasury of the *Church*, and to shower down the Streams of Grace upon his Members; and when all Power was given him in Heaven and Earth, he might be fitted to the following application of his Benefits, and to rule, and support, and defend his People.

6. Moreover he was pleased himself to become a Preacher of the *Gospel of Salvation*; not to all the World, but principally as a Minister of the *Circumcision*; that is, the *Jews*, Rom. 15. 8. He that purchased Salvation, condescended also to proclaim it. The Preaching of the Gospel, is a Work that Christ thought not himself too good for, sometimes to many, sometimes to one or two, as he had opportunity, often with Tears, and always with Earnestness and Compassion, did he go about doing good, and seeking the *lost*, and healing the *diseased*, and calling

Men,

Men to *Faith* and *Repentance*, and offering them the *Grace* and *Life* which he purchaſed.

7. And he was pleaſed alſo to ſeal up his Doctrine by his Works, caſting out Devils, healing all Diſeaſes, raiſing the *Dead*, and working divers other Miracles, to aſſure them that he came from *God*, and did *his* Work, and revealed *his* Will, that ſo the *World* might have no excuſe for their Unbelief; but that they would not *believe* upon any other account, might yet *believe* him for the ſake of his Works, *John* 3. 2. *Acts* 2. 22. *Heb.* 2. 4. *John* 5. 36. & 10. 25, 38. & 14. 11, 12. & 15. 24.

8. Beſides all this, he gave up himſelf to a *Life of Suffering*, being deſpiſed by his Creatures whom he came to *redeem*, and deſtitute voluntarily of fleſhly Pleaſures, and of that Riches, and worldly Proviſion that might procure it: He was a Man of *Sorrows*, afflicted from his *Youth*, perſecuted from the Cradle; he gave his Cheeks to the Smiters, and his Perſon to be made the Scorn of Fools: He was crowned with Thorns, ſpit upon, and buffeted, and having ſweat Water and Blood, in his Agony in the Garden, he was hanged on a Groſs, where Thieves were both his Companions and Revilers, where they gave him Gall and Vinegar to drink, pierced his *bleſſed Body* with a Spear, and put him to a ſhameful curſed Death. But he endured the Croſs, deſpiſing the Shame, and gave up himſelf thus a *Sacrifice for Sin*, and bore our *Tranſgreſſions*, that we might be *healed* by his Stripes; and having *ranſomed* us by his Blood, he was buried as an Offender, continuing for a time in the Power of the Grave, *Iſai.* 53. throughout, *Mat.* 26. & 27. *Hebr.* 12. 2. All this he conſented to undergo (though he conſented not to the Sin of them that did inflict it:) For he laid down his Life, it was not taken from him againſt his Will, *John* 10. 17, 18.

9. Having thus paid the Price of our *Reconciliation to God*, the Third Day he roſe again from the dead; tho'

tho' Soldiers watch'd his Grave, becauſe he had *foretold* them that he would riſe the Third Day; yet were they ſoon daunted by the Glory of an *Angel*, that came and rolled away the Stone. And ſo Chriſt made known his *Divine Power*, and *Victory*, and the finiſhing of his Work: And as by Death he overcame him that had the Power of *Death*, that is, the Devil, *Heb.* 3. 14. So by his *Reſurrection* he triumphed over Death it ſelf. For how ſhould the *Grave* detain the innocent, and Death overcome the *Lord of Life?* This was the glorious *Day of Triumph*; in remembrance of this, he appointed the *Lord's Day* to be obſerved by the Church. The *Reſurrection of Chriſt*, was the Confuſion of all the Powers of Darkneſs; the great Argument to confirm the Truth of his *Doctrine*, and prove his *Godhead* to the unbelieving World.

10. Being riſen, he more fully revealed his Goſpel, and ſent forth his *Apoſtles* and *Diſciples*, to proclaim the Offers of Life to the World, and ſettle the Churches in an *Holy Order*, when they had gathered them, and to ordain ſuch *Miniſters* to ſucceed them, as might carry on his *Work* to the end of the World, *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. And thus he is the faithful Law-giver to the *Church*.

11. When he had abode thus Forty Days on Earth, he aſcended up into *Heaven*, while his Diſciples ſtood by, and gazed after him, *Acts* 1. 9, 10. And there hath taken poſſeſſion in our Nature, advancing it to the *Father's Right-hand* in Glory, which was by Sin depreſt ſo low in Miſery. And ſo he is gone to *prepare a place for us*, leaving us a certain Word of Promiſe, that *he will come again, and take us to himſelf, that where he is, there we may be alſo*, John 14. 2, 3. And as *our Life now is hid there with Chriſt in God, ſo when he ſhall appear, we ſhall appear with him in glory*, Col. 3. 3, 4.

12. Being aſcended, he manifeſted his *Power* and his *Truth*, in ſending down the *Holy Ghoſt* upon his *Diſci-*

Disciples, enabling them to do such Works as he had done, and such as were necessary to convince the *unbelieving World*, and to conquer the opposing Wisdom and Power of the Flesh; enabling them to speak in variety of *Languages*, which they had never before learn'd: As also to understand, and powerfully preach the Mysteries of the *Gospel*, to confirm their *Doctrine* by *Miracles*, healing the Lame, the Blind, the Sick, casting out *Devils*, raising the Dead, and conquering the resistance of *Principalities and Powers*, in seeming Weakness, and in a contemptible Garb. Not to speak now of the *sanctifying Work* of the same *Spirit* on them, and on the rest of the *Church*.

13. Lastly in this *Glory Christ* intercedeth for us, and is our High-Priest in the Heavens with God, living for ever, procuring and conveying to us the Mercies which we need upon the account of his Sacrifice: Ruling his *Church*, and preserving them; succeeding his *Cause*, and *Servants*; restraining and subduing his Enemies and ours, and will perfect his Work at the Day of his *coming to Judgment*. So much of the Works of *Christ*.

4. The Fourth Point to be understood concerning our *Redemption*, is, *The Nature and Worth of the Benefits that are procured for us*. Which though you may gather much from what is said, and the full handling of them would be a larger Work than is suitable to my present Ends, yet such a brief Recital I shall here give you, as my Ends require.

In general, we have all from *Jesus* the *Mediator* that is worth the having; even all the Blessings of this present Life, and of the Life to come. As we lost our *Right* to all by Sin, so we have our restored *Right* by *Christ* alone, who came to destroy Sin, and its Effects. Had not he interposed, we might have had materially Life, and Natural Faculties, and other Things, which now are Mercies; but not *as Mercies*. but as the Requisites to our deserved Punishment: E-

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ven as the Devils have their Being, and natural Perfections to sustain them in their Sufferings. Nature it self, so far as Good, and all *Natural Blessings*, are now of *Grace*: And that not only of such *Grace* as they were to *Adam*, which was *Mercy without proper Merit*, but of *Gospel Grace* procured by *Christ*; which is *Mercy contrary to Merit*. It is no *sounder Doctrine* to say, that *God* doth without the Merit of his Son bestow our common *forfeited Mercies*, either on the *Elect*, or others, than that he giveth us his *saving Grace* without it. As all things are delivered into the hands of *Christ*, *John* 13. 3. So none can receive any good but from his hands. To give Mercies to Men that forfeit them, and deserve Misery, is *so far* to pardon their Sin; for to remit the Sin, is to remit the Punishment: But the *Scripture* is not acquainted with any Pardon of Sin, but what is on the Account of the *Merits* of *Christ*. They that deny this *Mercy* of *God*, in giving even to the *Ungodly* such a measure of forgiveness, do speak against the daily and hourly Experience of all the World; and therefore need no other Confutation.

More particularly. 1. Christ having taken the *Humane Nature* into *Union* with the *Divine*, our Nature is thereby unconceivably advanced, and brought nigh to God.

2. Having fulfilled the Law, and offered himself a *Sacrifice for Sin*, God's *Justice*, and *Wisdom*, and *Holiness*, and *Goodness*, is admirably demonstrated: And this *Sacrifice* is both satisfactory and meritorious, on our behalf, *Heb.* 1. 3. 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. *Heb.* 9. 26. and 10. 12.

3. The *World*, and the *Devil*, and *Earth*, and the *Grave*, are conquered by him; in preparation to our Conquest.

4. The Lord Jesus himself *being risen* and *justified*, hath received all *Power* in Heaven and Earth, *Mat.* 28. 19. and is enabled to do all things that are necessary for his further Ends. As the *Redeemer* he is be-

become Lord of our selves, and of all we have; and he is made the *Sovereign Ruler* of all, having full Power to relax the Law that cursed us, and to deal with the World on Terms of *Grace*.

5. Accordingly he hath kept off the Stroke of the rigorous *Justice of God*, and hindered the strict Execution of the Law of Works, and giveth still abundance of forfeited Mercies to the sinful World, keeping them from deserved Torments, while he is treating with them on Terms of Life.

6. He hath made an universal Deed of Gift, of Christ, and Life, to all the World, on Condition that they will but *accept* the offer, 1 *John* 5. 10, 11, 12. *John* 1. 11, 12. & 3. 16, 17, 18, 19. In this Testament, or Promise, or Act of Oblivion, the Sins of all the World are conditionally pardoned, and they are conditionally justified, and reconciled to God.

7. He hath given *Apostles*, *Evangelists*, *Pastors*, and *Teachers*, to proclaim this Act of Grace to the World, commanding them to go into all the World, and preach this *Gospel* to *every Creature*, and promise *Salvation* to all that by *Faith* will become his true Disciples, *Mark* 16. 16. *Matth.* 20. 20, 22. So that their Commission also for the Promulgation is universal.

8. Tho' his Servants have most lamentably neglected their Duty, and have not gone abroad the World to divulge the *Gospel* according to his *Will*, imagining that this Work had been proper to *Apostles*; and tho' the Nations have sinfully neglected a due Enquiry after this blessed Light, yet hath he not left himself among them without Witness, but hath given them some Dawnings of the Day, or some Morn-light, in the Reflections of *Evangelical Truth*, who have not seen the Sun it self: Much *Mercy* they have had, notwithstanding their Transgressions; and while they served Devils, they have been provided for by God, *in whom they live, and move, and be: Doing them good,*

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and giving them Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness; and this to teach them, that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him, and find him, tho' he be not far from every one of them, Acts 14. 17. & 17. 27, 28. *And that which may be known of God, is manifest among them, for God hath shewed it to them; for the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead: So that they are without excuse*, Rom. 1. 19, 20. By Experience they may find, that God dealeth not now in Rigor of Justice, but on Terms of Grace, and that Sin is not now unpardonable; and they should know that the *Goodness of God leadeth them to Repentance*, Rom. 2. 4.

9. As the Gospel conditionally pardoneth all their Sins, and offereth them everlasting Life, so it containeth the clearest Reasons, and most effectual Motives, to perswade them to accept the Offer. It affordeth them most excellent Precepts and Instructions, and Exhortations, and other Helps to bring them to a willingness, that Salvation may be theirs.

10. To which also is added abundance of outward providential Helps, to further the working of the *Gospel*; as seasonable Afflictions and Mercies of divers sorts.

11. And with these is usually concurrent some inward Motions, and Assistance of the Holy Ghost; as knocking at the Door, where he is not yet let in and entertained.

12. And by their presence in the visible Church, even the Ungodly have many Benefits in the Ordinances, and Instructions, and Examples of the Saints. All these (besides a Resurrection) are common Effects of General Redemption, and not appropriated to the Elect.

Besides which there are others that the Elect only do receive. As 1. God is pleased by effectual Grace to draw them to his Son, and make the Gospel successful to their Conversion, insuperably teaching and changing them by his Spirit, and causing them to repent, and believe in Christ, and to perform the Conditions of his forementioned Promises. That Love that brought the Lord on Earth, that cloathed him with Flesh, that lifted him up upon the Cross, doth stream forth in his Season into the Hearts of his Elect, and toucheth them with a changing Power, and winneth them to his Father and himself, and droppeth into them those heavenly Principles, which will grow up in them to *everlasting Life*.

2. Hereupon the Soul believing in Christ is united to him, as a Member of his Body, even of his true Catholick Church; and Christ is become the Head, the Husband, the Lord, the Saviour of that Soul in a special sort. Christ *himself* is *first* given to us in these *Relations*; and *from* him as our *Head*, his following Benefits are conveyed. *He that hath the Son hath Life, and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life*, for *this Life is in the Son*, 1 John 5. 11, 12. He is the *Vine, and we are the Branches*, and out *of him we can do nothing*, John 15. 1, 2, 5. As it was not we that *purchased* our own Salvation, so it is not we, but Christ that must have the keeping, and dispensing of the purchased Benefits. For *it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and that he should be the Head over all things to his Church*, that it might by communication become his fulness, *Col.* 1. 19. *Ephes.* 1. 22, 23. He is our Treasury, and from him we must have our continual Supplies: For *with him the Father will give us all things*, Rom. 8. 32. And thus Christ will *dwell in our Hearts by Faith*, Ephes. 3. 17. And set up the Kingdom of God within us.

3. Hereupon we have the Pardon of all our Sins; not only as to the temporal Punishment, nor only as to the bestowing of *Temporal Mercies*, or common Helps

Helps of Creatures, and Providences; for this is but a *winking at the Days of our Ignorance*, (Acts 17. 30.) in comparison of the Pardon which afterward we receive. Nor is it only a conditional, or offered Pardon; but it is an actual Remission of the *eternal*, and of *all the destructive Punishment*. And thus we are justified from all that might be charged on us from the Law, and accepted, and used as just by God. There is a kind of forgiveness that was promised to the Sacrificers, *Lev.* 4. 20, 26, 31, 35. & 5. 10, 13, 16, 18. & 6. 7. *Numb.* 15. 28. But as that was upon Christ's account, so it extended not to the Pardon of the *eternal Punishment* to any but true *Believers*. He that was once crucified, is *exalted by God's Right-hand, a Prince, and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of Sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses*, Acts 13. 38, 39. When our Eyes are open, and we *are turned from darkness to light, and from the Power of Satan unto God*, we then *receive Remission of our Sins*, Acts 26. 18. When we are *delivered from the Power of Darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of Christ; in him we have then Redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveness of Sins*, Col. 1. 13, 14. And *blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not Sin*, Rom. 4. 7. And now *who shall condemn us? It is God that justifieth us: For there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 1, 33, 34.

4. With this benefit doth concur, *our Reconciliation to God*, and our *Adoption*; by which we are made his Sons, and God is pleased to own us as our Father. For being one with Christ the Son of God, we are Sons by him. For *to as many as receive him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name*, John 1. 12. This is the wonderful Love that the Father hath bestowed on those

those that were his *Enemies*; that they should not only be reconciled to him by the Death of his Son, but also be called the Sons of God, *Romans* 5. 10. 1 *John* 3. 1. For he hath *chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in Love; having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his Will, to the praise of the Glory of his Grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved*, Eph. 1. 4, 5, 6. O what an unspeakable Mercy is it to have the blessed God, whom we had so oft offended, to become our reconciled Father in Christ! For it is not an empty Title that he assumeth; but he hath more abundant Love to us, and Tenderness of our Welfare, than any Title can make us understand.

5. And hereupon it doth immediately follow, that we have a Right to the blessed *Inheritance* of his Sons, and are certain *Heirs* of his Heavenly Kingdom, *Colos.* 1. 12. For if *Sons, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ*, Rom. 8. 17. *Being saved by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and justified by Grace through Christ, we are made Heirs, according to the hope of Eternal Life*, Tit. 3. 5, 6, 7. *Being begotten again to a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us*, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.

6. Withal the *Holy Ghost is given to us*, not only to close us at first with Christ, but to take up his abode in us as his Temples, and to be the *Agent*, and *Life* of Christ within us, and to do his Work, and maintain his Interest, and cleanse us of all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, and sanctifie us throughout, and to strive against, and conquer the Flesh, and to keep us by Divine Power through Faith unto Salvation, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. *Gal.* 5. 17, 22. 2 *Cor.* 6. 1. 1 *Pet.* 1. 5. For *because we are Sons, God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our Hearts, whereby we cry Abba, Father*, Gal. 4. 6.

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This Spirit of Adoption which we receive, doth *bear witness with our Spirits, that we are the Sons of God*, Rom. 8. 15. 16. *For if any Man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. By this *Spirit* is the *Spirit of the World cast out of us*; the *Spirit of Pride*, and *of Blindness*, and *of Delusion*, and *Hard-heartedness*, and of sensuality, and malice, and hypocrisie, are cast out. By this is Gods *Image* imprinted on our *Souls*, we are conformed to his blessed *Will*; *we are made partakers of the Divine Nature, being Holy, as God is Holy, Colos.* 3. 10 2 Pet. 1. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 16. Hereby we are delivered from the thraldom of sin, and the slavery of the *Devil*; and the seduction of the world and our treacherous Flesh. Hereby also we are fitted for the *service of God*, to which before we were undisposed and unfit. O what an ease is it to the *Soul*, to be free from so much of the burden of sin? What an honour is it to have the *Spirit of God* within us, and to have a nature so truly *Heavenly and Divine?* How can it go ill with him that hath *God dwelling in him, and that dwells in God?* 1 John 4. 15.

7. Another of our precious benefits by *Christ* is, that we *shall be actually imployed in the special and nearest service of God that on earth is to be performed.* Let *diseased Souls* desire idleness, and swinish sinners take pleasure in the mire, and feed like ravenous beasts on carrion, or as dogs on dung: but the Saints will ever rejoyce in God, and take it for the most *blessed life on Earth*, when they can but do him the greatest Service. Let his *Enemies* that hate his Service, be weary of it, as if it were a toil or drudgery work; but his *Children* will desire no sweeter work: they never think themselves so well as when they are most serviceable to their *blessed Lord*, though at the greatest cost and labour to the flesh. So sweet is *Gods service*, that the more of it we can do, the more is our pleasure, and honour, and content. Other work *spendeth* strength, but this *increaseth*

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it : other work must have recreation intermixt, but this is it self the most delightful recreation : other service is undertaken for the love of the wages ; but this is undertaken for the love of the *Master*, and the work, and is wages it self, to them that go through with it. For other service is but a means, and that to some inferiour end ; but this is a means to the *Everlasting Perfection*, and *Blessedness* of the Soul ; and such a means, as containeth, or presently procureth somewhat of the end. All the *Saints* are even here *a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a Peculiar People, that they should shew forth the praises of him that hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light : they are an holy Priesthood, to offer up a spiritual Sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9. Their very bodies are *a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, in their reasonable service.* What a sweet work is it to live in the daily *Love of God?* in his *praises* ; in the *hopes*, and *sweet fore thoughts of everlasting joyes* : The world affordeth not such a *Master*, nor such a *Work*.

8. Another of the precious benefits by *Christ* is, *The liberty of access in all our wants to God by Prayer, with a promise to be heard.* The flaming sword did keep the way to the *tree of life*, till Christ had taken it down, and consecrated for us a new and *living way*, through the Vail, which is his flesh : and now we have *boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus : and therefore may draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith*, Heb. 10. 19, 20, 22. When worldlings may cry to their *Baal* in vain, the *Righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their* (hurtful) *troubles.* O what a Mercy is it in our distresses, in our dangers, in our wants, to have a *God*, a faithful *merciful Father* to go to, and make our moan to for relief ? What a *Mercy* is it, when our flesh and our hearts do fail us, when friends and worldly things all fail us, to have *God* for the *Rock* of our *hearts*, and our *Portion ?* Psal. 73. 26.

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When sickness begins to break these bodies, and *earthly delights* do all forsake us, and death calls us to come to our *endless state*, then to have a *reconciled Father* to to go to, and crave his aid, upon the encouragement of a promise, and recommend our *souls* into his hand as to a *faithful Creator*, and our surest *dearest friend*: this is a *Mercy* that no man can well value, till they come to use it. To know every day, that as oft as ever we come to *God*, we are always welcome; and that our persons, and *prayers* are *pleasing* to him through his Son; what a *Mercy* is it? One would think we should live joyfully, if we had but one such promise as this for faith to live upon: *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me.* Psalm 50. 15. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*, Joh. 14. 13, 14. No wonder if they be rich, that have so free access to such a treasure; and if they be safe that have access to so sure a help. For *God* is a very present *help* in trouble, *Psal.* 46. 1.

9. Another *precious benefit* is, that we have *Peace of Conscience, or ground for it at the least, in our Peace with God*: and *so may come to assurance of Salvation, and may partake of the joy in the Holy Ghost*: For in this peace and Joy the *Kingdom of God* doth much consist. When the chief cause of all our fear and sorrow is done away, what then is left to break our *Peace*? When we have no cause to fear the *flames of Hell*, nor the *sting of death*, or the appearance of our *Judge*, any further then to move us to make ready, what then should greatly trouble the *Soul*? If *God and Heaven* be not matter of comfort, I know not what is. If we saw a man, that had got many *Kingdoms*, to be still sad, and dumpish because he had no more; we would say, he were very ambitious, or covetous: and yet he might have reason for it: But if you have the *Love of God*, and a title by promise to the *Heavenly Inheritance*, and yet you are discontented, and *God*, and *Glory* is not enough for you, this is most unreasonable.

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10. Another of our precious benefits by Christ is, Our *Spiritual Communion with his Church, and holy Members.* We do not only joyn with them in *outward Communion*, but we unite our desires, and there is an harmony of affections. We are in the main of one *mind*, and *will*, and *way*; and we jointly constitute the *Body* of our *Lord, We are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels to the general Assembly, and Church of the first born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant*, Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24. We are joyned to that Body, and have Communion with it, which consisteth both of Militant, and Triumphant Saints, and of the Angels also. *We are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houshold of God, and are built on the Foundation of the Apostles, and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone; in whom all the Building fitly framed together, groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord; in whom we also are builded together, for an Habitation of God, through the Spirit*, Eph. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22. And as in holy Concord we serve the Lord, having *one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one Faith, one Baptism, one Rule*, the Word of God, *one Mind, one Heart, one Work* of *Holiness* and *Righteousness* in the main; *one Hope, one Heaven*, the Place of our Expectations: So have we the Fruit of the Prayers of each other, and of all the Church, and have the Honour, the Safety, and other Benefits of being *Members* of so blessed a *Society.*

Yea, we have in this Communion the whole *Church* obliged, and disposed, according to their Capacity, to endeavour the good of every Member. So that Ministers, and Magistrates; yea, tho' they were Apostles and Prophets, *Paul*, or *Apollos*, *all are ours*, 1 Cor. 3. 22. Kings have their *Power for us*; Ministers have their *Gifts for us*; and *for us* they must use them. If

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we suffer, every Member must be as forward to assist us, and if we want, to relieve us according to their Power, as if they suffered with us, 1 *Cor.* 12. 25, 26.

Yea the Angels are our *Brethren* (Rev. 22. 9.) and *Fellow-Servants*; yea, *ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation*, Heb. 1. 14. To *encamp about them, and to bear them in their Arms*, rejoycing to behold their Graces, and Prosperity, as was shewed before.

11. Another of our precious Benefits by Christ is, that *all things shall work together for our good*, Rom. 8. 28. When we are *sanctified to God*, all things are *sanctified* to us, to serve us for God, and help us to him. Every Creature that we have to do with, is as it were another thing to the *Saints*, than to other Men. They are all Wheels in that universal Engine of *Grace*, to carry us to *Salvation*. The same things that are common Mercies to others, are special to us, as proceeding from a special Love, and being designed to a special Use. As *Flesh-pleasing* is the ultimate End of the Ungodly, and all things are thereby debased, to be but Means to that ignoble End: So the *pleasing and fruition of God*, is the End of all the Saints, and thereby all things that they have to do with, are advanced to the Honour of being sanctified means to this most high and noble End: And as they are engaged to use them to this End, and consequently to their own greatest advantage; so God hath engaged himself to bless them in that holy use, and to cause them all by his gracious Providence to co-operate to their good. The greatest Afflictions, the cruellest Persecutions from the most violent Enemies, our Wants, our Weaknesses, and Death it self, all must concur to carry on this Work. What then should a Christian fear, but *Sin?* How honourable, and how safe, and how happy a Life may he live, that hath all these assured for his Service? And what causeless Fears are they that use to afflict the *Servants of God*, concern-

ing their outward Troubles and Neceſſities? What do we fear and groan under, and complain of, but our Father's Phyſick, and the Means of our Salvation? If this one Truth were but believed, and received, and uſed according to its worth, O what a Life would *Chriſtians* live!

12. The laſt and greateſt of our Benefits by Chriſt is, *our Reſurrection, and our Juſtification at the Bar of God, and our Reception into Glory.* This is the end of all, and therefore containeth all. For this *Chriſt died*, for this we are *Chriſtians*, for this we *believe*, *hope*, and *labour*; for this we *ſuffer*, and *deny our ſelves*, and renounce this World. Our Bodies ſhall then be ſpiritual and glorious, no more troubled with Infirmities, Diſeaſes, or Neceſſities. Our Souls ſhall be both naturally and graciouſly perfected, both in their Faculties and Qualities. We ſhall be brought nigh to God; we ſhall be numbred with the Inhabitants of the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, and be Members of *that bleſſed Society*, and be Companions and Equals with the *Angels of God*: We ſhall for ever behold our *glorified Redeemer*, and ſee our own Nature united to the *Godhead*; and we ſhall have the greateſt and neareſt intuition and fruition of *God*, the fulleſt Love to him, and the ſweeteſt reſt, content, and delight in him, *that our created Natures* are capable of: We ſhall everlaſtingly be employed in this *love* and *delight*, and in his *praiſes* with all the heavenly Hoſt: And the *Glory of God* will ſhine forth in our Glory, and the abundance of his Goodneſs will be communicated to us; and he will be well-pleaſed with us, with our Praiſes, with all that *bleſſed Society*, and with our Head; and this will endure to all *Eternity*.

Chriſtians, I have now named in a few words, thoſe Benefits by Chriſt, which the Heart of Man is not able to value, in any proportion to their unexpreſſible worth: I have named that in an Hour, which you will enjoy for ever. So much of our Benefits by Chriſt.

5. The

5 The Fifth Point to be underſtood, in the right Knowledge of Chriſt, is, *The Terms on which he conveyeth his Benefits to Men, and how we muſt be made Partakers of them.*

And theſe Mercies are of two ſorts: 1. *Common.* 2. *Proper* to them that are *Heirs of Salvation.* The *Common* are, 1. Thoſe Diſcoveries of Grace, that are made even to *Heathens* in the *Creatures, and the merciful Providences* of God. Theſe are *abſolutely* and freely beſtowed in ſome meaſure on all, but in a greater meaſure on all, but in a greater meaſure upon ſome, as pleaſes the Giver. 2. The Supernatural, or Inſtituted Means of *revealing Chriſt*, and Life to the World, and drawing them to a ſaving Conſent of *Faith.* Theſe are the *Goſpel* written and preached, with other concomitant helps. The *Commiſſion Chriſt* hath given to his Embaſſadors, is to preach this *Goſpel* to all the *World*, even to every (reaſonable) Creature, without exception, or reſtriction. And it is abſolutely and freely given, where it is given. But as to the providential diſpoſal of the Event, God cauſeth it not to be ſent to all, but to whom he ſeeth meet.

2. The *Proper* or *Special Mercies* are of two ſorts. 1. Some are *Phyſical inherent Qualities*, or *performed Acts.* 2. And ſome are *adherent Rights*, or *Relations.*

Of the former *inherent* ſort, there are theſe Three Degrees: 1. There is the firſt ſpecial Work of *Vocation, Converſion*, or *Regeneration*, cauſing the Sinner to repent, and believe, and giving him the Principle of *Spiritual Life.* 2. There is the beſtowing of the In-dwelling Spirit of God, and progreſſive Sanctification of Heart and Life, and perſeverance with Victory. 3. There is the perfecting of all this, in our glorious Perfection in the Life to come.

For the firſt of theſe, God hath not promiſed it conditionally or abſolutely to any individual Perſon

that hath it not. He hath bound all to repent and believe, but hath not promised to make them do it: (Only he hath revealed that there are certain Persons so given to Christ, as that they shall be infallibly drawn to believe.) But he hath appointed certain means for the Ungodly, which they are bound to use in order to their Conversion; and if they will not use them, they are without excuse. If they will, they have very much encouragement from God; both 1. In the Nature of the Means, which are fitted to their Ends, and are mighty to bring down all Oppositions. And 2. In the *Commands*, and *Institution* of God; whose Wisdom and Goodness may easily resolve us, that he will not appoint us means in vain, nor set his Creatures on fruitless Labours. And 3. Also from the Issue: For no Man can stand forth and say, Such an one did his best in the use of Means, and yet could not attain the End, but fell short of the Grace and Glory of God.

The Diseases of Mens Souls, are *Wilfulness and Blindness*: The Means of Cure, are the *Perswasions*, with the *Revelations* of the *Gospel*. Men have the Natural Powers of Understanding and Willing; but they want that right Disposition which we call the *Habit*, or *Moral Power*, which is no more then to say, *They are habitually blind* and *wilful*. It is so far from being unreasonable to teach, and perswade Men that are under such an Impotency as this, that there is nothing in the World that doth more bespeak our Teaching and Perswasions. For this is the Natural and Instituted way to cure them, and give them Power. What means of overcoming *Ignorance* like *Teaching?* And what means of overcoming *habituated Wilfulness*, like *Perswasion*, added to informing Truths? We do not use to reason Men out of a *Natural Impotency*, nor perswade them to do that, for which to they have no Faculties or Object; but it is the very Means of overcoming a *Moral Impotency*, and making Men willing of the Good which they rejected. And with this

this means doth God set in, and infallibly cause it to be effectual with his chosen. Thus no Man cometh to the *Son*, except the *Father draw* him; and then for the two following Degrees of *Holiness* in our *Sanctification*, and *glorious perfection*, God hath promised them to those that have this first Degree. For the *Spirit Holiness* is promised to all that truly *repent and believe* and *Salvation* to all that are *sanctified* and *persever*. So that the *Right* to these *inherent* Mercies, being *Relation*, is conveyed as other *Rights* and *Relations* a of which we are next to speak.

2. As the *Spirit* by the Operation of the *Word* upon the Heart, conveyeth the foresaid *inherent* Benefits or Qualities, and Acts, so the Promise of *Grace*, indited by Christ and the Spirit, doth as a Deed of Gift, or Testament, or Act of Oblivion, bestow on us our *Rights*, and *Spiritual Relations*; and from these they do result, as the immediate instrumental Cause. Thus doth he give Power or Right, to as many as *receive* him, to become the Sons of God, *John* 1. 12. Thus doth he give us Pardon, Justification, Adoption, and our Right to further Grace and Glory. And these Promises are Conditional; and our Repenting and Believing in Christ, is the *Condition*. And *therefore* till *Conversion* do bring us to *repent* and *believe*, we have no Right to any of these *Benefits of the Promise*. And *therefore* tho' our *Repentance* and *Faith* be none of the *proper Cause* of our Justification, or Right; yet the main Work, in order to our procurement of these Benefits that is now to be done, is to perswade the Sinner to repent and believe, to turn that he may live; for God's Act of Grace is past already, and the Conditional Pardon is granted long ago, and will effectually pardon us as soon as we perform the Condition, and not before. 'Till then, we hinder the Efficacy of the Deed of Gift: For Unbelief and Impenitency are true *Causes* of Mens *Condemnation*, tho' Faith and Repentance, be not *proper Causes* of their Salvation.

These Promises being Conditional, we cannot be assured of our part in the Benefits, but by being assured that we perform the Condition. By this you may see the Nature of *Presumption*; when Men say, they *believe* that which never was *promised*; or *believe* that they have *Right* to the *Blessings* that are promised to others, and not to them; or believe that they shall have the *Benefits promised*, when they perform not the *Conditions*; all this is *presuming*, and not true *believing*. If Men believe that God is reconciled to them, and will pardon them, and justifie them, and save them, when they are *unconverted, impenitent, unregenerate Men*; this is not indeed a *believing of God*, that hath never made them any such *Promise*, nor ever told them any such matter, but the contrary; but it is a believing the false Delusions of the Devil, and their own Hearts. He that will claim any Title to *Christ*, and Pardon, and Salvation, must have something to shew for it; yea, and something more than the most of the World have to shew; for the most shall be shut out. Every Man therefore that regardeth his *Salvation*, must seriously ask his Soul this Question, *What have I to shew for my Title to Salvation, more than the most of the World can shew? It is not saying, I hope to be saved, that will serve the turn, except I can give a Reason of my hopes. Thousands that lay claim to Salvation shall miss of it, because they have no Title to it.* And that which you must have to shew is this: A *Promise*, or *Deed of Gift* on *God's* part, and the *fulfilling of the Condition* on *your* part. God saith to all Men, *Whoever repenteth, believeth, or is converted, shall be saved.* When you have found that you repent of all your Sins, and truly believe, and are converted to God, then, and not till then, you may conclude that you shall be saved.

6. The Sixth Point to be understood, or believed, concerning these *Benefits* of *Christ*, is, the *infallible Certainty of them.* While Men look on the promised Glory

Glory to come, as on an uncertain thing, they will hardly be drawn to venture, and let go the Profits, and Pleasures of the World, to attain it; much less to part with *Life* it self. The Life of all our *Christian Motion*, is the unfeigned *belief* of the *Truth of God's Word*, and specially of the unseen Things of the *World* to come. Such as Mens belief of *Heaven* and *Hell* is, such will be the Bent of their *Hearts*, and the Course of their *Lives*, and such they will be in yielding to Sin, or in resisting it, and in all the Service they do for God. As all Men would take another Course, if they did but see *Heaven* and *Hell* with their Eyes; so all Men would presently throw away their worldly fleshly Pleasures, and turn to God, and an *holy Life*, if they did but as throughly believe the *Joys* and *Torments* to come, as if they saw them. Flesh and Blood can hardly judge of things, without the help of Sense; and fleshly Men take all things to be Fantasms, or Nothings, that are not within the Judgment of their *Senses*. They must *see* it, or *feel* it, or *taste* it, or hear it; and believing is a way that hardly satisfies them; tho' it be God himself that they are to believe. Believing is trusting the Credit of another; and we are naturally loth to trust to any, but our Eyes or other Senses. We are so false our selves, that we are ready to measure God by our selves, and to think that he is a Deceiver, because that we are such. And hence it is, that the World is so ungodly, that they venture on Sin, and will not be at the cost and labour of a *heavenly Life*; because they take the Matters of the *Life to come*, to be but *Uncertainties*, and have not so true a belief of them, as might possess them with a deep Apprehension of their *reality*. How should the Word profit them, that mix it not with *Faith*, Heb. 4. 2. unless by begetting *Faith* it self? O what a change would a *found belief* of the *Scriptures* make in the World! But having spoken so oft of this in other Writings, I shall say no more of it now. So much of the *Knowledge of Christ*.

II. I have shewed you the first part of this Direction, *How Christ must be received understandingly.* I now come to the second, which is, that *he must be received heartily.* As *God* must be *loved*, so *Christ* must be *believed in*, with all the *Heart*, and *Soul*, and *Strength*; if not with all in a *perfect* degree, (for that will not be till we come to Heaven) yet with *all* in a *predominant prevalent* degree. There are many Convictions, and good Meanings, and Wishes, and Purposes, which may proceed from *common Grace*, and be found in those that never shall be *saved*: These may be called (analogically) *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Desire*, as those that are found in the *truly Regenerate*; and yet the Persons in whom they are found, may not fitly be called *Believers*, or *Lovers of God*; because a Man is to be denominated from that in him which is predominant, and hath the chief Power on his Heart. The Soul of Man is not so simple as to move but one way: Its state in this Life is to stand between two differing Competitors, God and the World, Spirit and Flesh; and there is no Man that is totally given up to either of them. No Man is so good and spiritual, that hath not something in him that is bad and carnal. And no Man is so fully addicted to God, but the Creature hath too much Interest in his Heart. Nor is there any Man so given up to the Creature, in whom God hath no manner of Interest at all, in his Estimation, and Affections, if he indeed believe that there is a God. At least it is not so with all that are unconverted. Otherwise, 1. What is it that common Grace doth, if it no whit dispose them towards *God?* Certainly it would not else be *Grace.* 2. And if this were not so, then we must say, that no unregenerate Man hath any good in him, that is truly Moral: For if there be no Interest of God in his *Mind* or *Will*, there can be no good in him. But this is contrary to *Scripture* and *Experience.* It was undoubtedly some *Moral Good*, which Christ loved the Man for, in *Mark*

10.

10. 21. who was not far from the *Kingdom of God*. 3. Otherwise all Men must be equally departed from God, which is contrary to Experience. 4. Yea all Men must be as bad on Earth (privatively) as in Hell; which certainly is false. I may well say, that on Earth there is some good in the worst; much more in those that are almost perswaded to be *converted Christians*. Many a thought of the Goodness of God, and the *Necessity* of a *Saviour*, and of the Love of *Christ*, and of the Joys of *Heaven*, may be stirring and working in the Minds of the unsanctified; but if they take not up the *Heart* for *Christ*, the Person is not a true Believer. As the Gospel must be believed to be true, so *Christ* that is offered us in the Gospel *as good*, must be heartily and thankfully accepted accordingly: And the *Glory*, the *Justification*, *Reconciliation* with *God*, and other Benefits procured by him, and offered with him, must be valued, and desired above all earthly fleshly things. If you are convinced that Sin is evil, as contrary to God, and hurtful to you, and hereupon have some mind to let it go, and some wishes that *Christ* would save you from it, and yet still have a Love to it that is greater then your Dislike, and the Bent of your Heart is more for it, than against it, and your habituate *Desires* are rather to keep than to leave it: This is not *Sanctification*, nor a saving Consent to be saved by *Christ*. If you have some Convictions that Holiness is good, as being the *Image of God*, and pleasing to him, and necessary to your *Salvation*, and so should have some mind of Holiness on these grounds; yet if you have on the other side a greater Averseness to it, because it would deprive you of the Pleasures of your Sin, and the habitual Inclination of your Will is more against it than for it; certainly this will not stand with true *Sanctification*, *of Faith in Christ*, to save you from the Power of Sin by his Spirit. Thousands deceive themselves, by misunderstanding some common passages that are spoken to comfort *afflicted Consciences*, viz. *That the*

least true Desires after Grace, do prove the Soul to be gracious. This is true, if you speak of the least Desires which are predominant in the Soul; when our *Desire* is more habitually than our *unwillingness*, and we thus *prefer Christ* before all the World, the least of this is an Evidence of *saving Grace*. But such Desires as are subdued by the contrary Desires; and such a Will as is accompanied with a greater unwillingness, habitually; and such a Faith as is drowned in greater Unbelief; these are not Evidences of a saving change, nor can you justly gather any special Comfort from them. He that hath more *Unbelief*, than *Belief*, is not to be called a *Believer*, but an Unbeliever: And he that hath more *hatred* or *dislike* of *God* and *Holiness* than Love to him, is not to be called Godly, but Ungodly, not a Lover of God, but a Hater of him. I am easily perswaded, that many of you that are Ungodly could be contented that God be glorified, if his Glory do not cross your carnal Interest, and so you desire God's Glory even for it self, as that which is absolutely good in it self: But if your fleshly Interest be so dear to you, that you will sacrifice God's Glory to it, and had rather God were dishonoured, than your fleshly Interest contradicted, it is your Flesh then that is made your God, and your chief End. It is not every wish, or mind of Christ, no not to save you from Sin as Sin, that will prove you true Believers: Nor is it every minding of God, or love to him, no not as one apprehended by you to be the chiefest Good, and desirable for himself, as your End, that will prove indeed that you savingly love him; as long as the contrary Mind and Will is habitually predominant in you. Such as the very Habit and Bent of a Man's Heart is, such indeed is the Man. It's possible for a Man, even a good Man, to have two contrary Ends and Intentions, yea, ultimate Ends; as that which is desired for it self, and referred to nothing else, is called *Ultimate*: But it is not possible for him, to have two *principal predominant* Ends. So far as we are carnal still,

still, we make the pleasing of our Flesh, our *Ultimate End*. For doubtless we do not sin only by pleasing the Flesh, as *a means to God's Glory*; nor only in the mis-chusing of other means: But yet this is none of our principal End, so far as Men are truly sanctified. And because that is called a Man's Mind, or Will, which is the chiefest and highest in his Mind and Will; therefore we use to denominate Men from that only which beareth rule in them: And thus we may say with *Paul*, *It is not I, but Sin that dwelleth in me.* For a disowned Act that proceedeth from us, against the Bent and Habit of our Wills, and the Course of our Lives, from the Remnants of a carnal misguided Will, is not it that must denominate the Person, nor is so fully ours as the contrary Act. And therefore tho' indeed we sinfully participate of it; yet when the Question is, whether *believing*, or *unbelief*, *sinning*, or *obeying*, be *my* Work, it is not comparatively to be called *mine*, which I am much more against than for. So on the other side, if the unsanctified have some transient, superficial, uneffectual Acts of *Desire*, or *Faith*, or *Love* to God, which are contrary to the Bent and Habit of their Hearts, this is not theirs, nor imputable to them, so far as hence to give them their Denomination. It is not *they* that do it, but the common Workings of the *Spirit* upon them.

If ever then you would be assured that you are *Christians*, look to the *Habitual Bent* of your Hearts, and see that you do not only talk of *Scripture*, and slightly believe it, and speak well of *Christ*, with some good Wishes, and Meanings, and Purposes; but as you love your Souls, see that Christ be received as your dearest *Saviour*, with Thankfulness, and greatest Love, and as your *Sovereign Lord*, with true Subjection; and that he have your Superlative Estimations and Affections, and all things in the World be put under him in your *Souls*. This must be so, if you will have the Portion of *Believers*. No *Faith* that

that is short of this, will prove you *Christ's Disciples indeed*, or *Heirs* of the *Promises* made to *Believers*. The Voice of *Christ* that calls to you in the *Gospel*, is, *My Son, give me thy Heart*, Prov. 23. 26. Do what thou wilt in Ways of Duty, and think as highly as thou wilt of thy self, thou art no true *Believer* in *Christ's* account, till thou hast given him thy Heart. If he have thy *Tongue*, if he have thy *good Opinion*; nay, if thy *Body* were burnt in his Cause, if he had not thy Love, thy Heart, it were as nothing, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. For thy Works and Sufferings are so far acceptable (through Christ) as they are Testimonies of this, that *Christ* hath thy *Heart*. If he have not thy *Heart*, he takes it as if he had nothing: And if he have this, he takes it as if he had all. For this is not only preferred by him before all; but also he knows that this commandeth all. If *Christ* have thy *Heart*, the *Devil* will not have thy *Tongue*, and *Life*; the Ale-house, or a Harlot, will not have thy *Body*; nor the *World* will not have the principal part of thy *Life*. If *Christ* have thy *Heart*, it will be heard much in thy Conference, it will be seen in thy Labours. For that which hath a Man's *Heart*, will hardly be hid, unless he purposely hide it, which a Christian neither can, nor ought to do. It would make a Man wonder to hear some Wretches, that will run from God as fast as they can, and yet face you down that God hath their Hearts; that have no mind, so much as to meditate, or talk of Christ, or his *precious Blood*, or *mysterious Redemption*, or the *glorious Kingdom* purchased by him; that will be at neither Cost nor Labour in his Service, and yet profess that Christ hath their Hearts; that will refuse an *holy heavenly Life*, and perhaps make a scorn of it, and maliciously prate against the Sanctified, and yet will stand to it, that the *Holy Ghost*, the *Sanctifier* of the *Elect*, hath their Hearts. No wonder if those Hearts are ill managed, and in a miserable deceived State, that are so unacquainted with themselves.

Faith

Faith entereth at the *Understanding*, but it hath not all its essential parts and is not the *Gospel-faith* indeed, till it have possessed the will. The *hearts* of *Faith* is wanting till *Faith* hath taken possession of the *heart*. For by *Faith* Christ *dwelleth* in the *heart*, *Ephes.* 3. 17. And if he dwell not in the *heart*, he dwells not in the *Man*, in a saving sort. He had some interest in *Judas*, *Simon Magus*, *Ananias*, and *Saphira*, as to the *head*, and perhaps somewhat more in a superficial sort. But Satan *entred* into the *heart* of one, and *filled* the *heart* of another of them with a lie, and the *heart* of the third was not *right in the sight of God*, and therefore he had no part or lot in *Christ*, but was still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; and all because *Christ*, was not heartily entertained, *Acts* 5. 3. & 8. 22, 23. It is in the *heart* that the word must have its rooting, or else it will wither in time of tryal. It is seeking with the *whole heart* that is the evidence of the blessed, *Psal.* 119. 2. And it is a *feigned turning* when men turn not to *God* with the *whole heart*, Jer. 3. 10. This is *Gods* promise concerning his Elect; *I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart*, Jer. 24. 7. See then that the *heart* be unfeignedly delivered up to *Christ*: for if *Christ* have it not, the *flesh*, the world, and the *Devil* will have it. Your *Hearts* must be a dwelling for one of these Masters; choose you whether.

It is the damnation of most professed *Christians*, that they have nothing for *Christ* but a good *opinion*, or a few *good words* or *outside services*, or some sleight *Religiousness* on the by, when the *flesh* and the *world* go away with their *hearts*, and yet they will not know it, nor confess it. *Christ* will not be an underling or servant to your flesh. Your *Hearts* he hath bought, and your *Hearts* he will have; or you are none of his. If *he* shall have nothing from you but a *name*, *you* shall have nothing but the name of his purchased *Salvation*.

III.

III. The last part of the Direction yet remains, *viz.* that *you must close with Christ entirely, as* well as *Understandingly* and *Heartily*, It is *whole Christ* that must be received with the *whole heart*.

For the understanding of this, it must be known, both *How* and *Why* Christ is offered to us.

As he came into the world to destroy the works of the *Devil*, 1 *John* 3. 8. and to *seek* and *save* that which was lost, *Luke* 19. 19. and by his *Mediation* to *reconcile us to God*, and bring us up to *Glory*; so two things were to be done, for the accomplishment of this: first he was himself to *Merit our Salvation*, and pay the price of our *Redemption* on the *Cross*, and in his own person to conquer the *world*, the *Devil*, and *death*, and the *grave*: and then he was by his Intercession in the *Heavens* to make application of this, and bestow the benefits thus purchased by him.

And because it was he, and not we that made the purchase, it therefore pleased the *Father* that the *purchased treasure* should be put into his hands, and not immediately put into ours. He is become our *Treasury*, and authorized to be our *Head*: All Power is given him in *Heaven*, and *Earth*. We have so fouly miscarry'd already, that he will no more trust his honour in our hands, as at first he did. We shall have nothing of *Pardon*, or *Grace*, or *Glory*, but what we have in and from the *Son*, *God hath given us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son: He that hath the Son, hath Life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life.* 1 John 11. 12. It is not only the *Nature* and *Person* of *Christ* that is to be believed in; but it is the *Person*, impowred to certain ends, and cloathed with his Office, that we must now entertain. Now the Office of Christ being for our Salvation, and the *Glory of God*, is suited to these happy ends.

And our Necessities are principally in these three points. 1. We have the *Guilt of sin* upon us to be pardoned, and the *Wrath of God*, and *Curse* of the *Law*, and

and the punishment of sin to be removed. 2. We have the corruption of our Nature to be healed; the power of sin to be destroyed; the *Image of God* repaired on us; and our *hearts* and *lives* to be acted, and ordered according to the *Will of God*; and to these ends, *Temptations* are to be conquered; and our *Souls* directed, strengthened, and preserved to the end. 3. We must be raised from the Grave at the last day; we must be Justified in *Judgement*, and possessed of that *Glory* which is the *End of our Faith*. To this *Justification*, *Sanctification*, and *Glorification* may the rest be reduced.

Now the Office of *Christ* is suted to these Necessities of ours: and as we cannot possibly be saved, unless all these *Necessities* be supplyed, and these works done for us: so we cannot possibly have these things done, but by Accepting of *Christ*, as Authorized, and impowred by his *Office*, and *Perfections*, to do them.

The *Glory* that *God* will have by this work, I have before expressed to you at large. He will have his *Justice*, and *Wisdom*, and *Power*, and *Holiness*, and *Mercy* to be demonstrated and honoured by *Christ*. And therefore *Christ* hath resolved to give out none of his benefits, but in such manner, and ways as may best attain these highest *Ends*.

These several points therefore I must intreat you here to note distinctly. 1. That you must be brought into a special Relation to the *Person of Christ*, *as cloathed with his Office*, before you can lay claim to his *Saving Benefits*. He is the *Head*, and you must become his *Members*: He is the *Husband* of the *Church*, and you must become his *Spouse*; and so of the rest. This is called our *Uniting* to *Christ*, which must go before our further Communion with him. It is the *Will of God*, that you shall never receive his *Benefits* without, or before you receive his Son: (except only those *Benefits* which go before your *Union* with *Christ* himself, in order to the

the accomplishing it; as the *Gospel*, the gift of Faith to the Elect, &c.) You shall never have actual *Pardon*, *Justification*, *Adoption*, *Sanctification*, or *Glory*, till you have first saving *Interest in Christ* himself. He is the *Vine*, and we are the *Branches*: we must be planted into him, and live in him, or else we can have nothing further from *God*, nor do nothing acceptable to *God* And therefore the first and great work of *Faith* is to Receive and close with the *Person of Christ*, as cloathed with his *Office*.

2. Understand and note, that as you shall not have his great *Benefits* before, or without his *Person*; so *God* hath resolved, that you shall not have his Special *Benefits*, unless you will take them *all together* (I speak of men at age, that are capable of all) You shall not have *Pardon*, and *Justification*, or *Glory*, without *Sanctification*; nor the comforts of *Christ* without the *guidance* and *government* of *Christ*. You must have all, or none.

3. From hence it follows, that therefore you must Receive, and close with Christ Entirely, in his whole Office, as he is to accomplish all these works, or else you cannot be United to him. He will not be divided: you shall not have *Christ* as a *Justifier* of you, if you will not have him as a *Guide*, and *Ruler*, and *Sanctifier* of you. He will not be a *partial Saviour*: if you will not consent that he shall save you from your sins, he will not consent to save you from *Hell*.

4. Understand, and note that *Christ* will look to his *Fathers Interests*, *and Honour*, and his *own*, as well as to your *Salvation*, yea and before it. And therefore you must not hope for any *Mercy* from him, in any way that is dishonourable to him, or that is inconsistent with his own *blessed Ends* and *Interest*. And therefore do not look for any such *Grace* from him as shall discharge you from your duty, or give you liberty to dishonour or disobey him; nor do not think that you shall have him Related to you only for your own ends, but on terms of highest honour to *God*, and your

your Redeemer. And do not think that your *Grace* is ever the less free, because *Gods Honour* is thus preferred: for if you *are Christians indeed*, you will take *Gods Interest*, as your own highest *Interest*, and will confess, that you could not have your own *Ends*, and welfare any other way.

5. Understand and Note also, that as all your *Mercies* are in the hand of *Christ*, so *Christ* hath appointed in his *Gospel*, a certain way and course of means, in which he will bestow it: And you cannot expect it from him, in any other way but his own. As God hath made *Christ* the way, and no man cometh to the Father but by him, so *Christ* hath ordained a standing course of means, which are his way for the making over of his *Benefits*: and here you must have them, or go without them.

6. Understand and Note, that there are *some* of *Christs Ends*, and *Benefits*, that the very *Natural man desires*, and some that *Corrupted Nature* is against. Now it is therefore the established way of *Christ*, to Promise us those which we *can desire*, on condition that we will also *accept* of, and *submit to those that we are against*. Not but that his Grace doth dispose men to the performance of such *Conditions*: But his *Grace* worketh by means: and a *Conditional promise* is his stablished *means*, to draw mans heart to the *Performance* of the Condition (which well considered, is a sufficient answer to the Arguments that are commonly urged against the *Conditionality* of the *Promise*.) As the *Spirit* doth powerfully work within; so he useth that *Word* from without, as his Instrument, which worketh *Sapientially*, and *Powerfully* to the same work. If a Physician have two medicines to give his Patient, as necessary for his cure, the one very sweet, and the other bitter; the one which he loves, and the other which he loaths, he will Promise him the *Sweeter*, if he will take the *Bitter* one; that by the *love* of one, he may prevail against the *loathing* of the other, and may tice it down. He will not *promise* the *bitter* one

which

which is loathed, and make the Taking of the *sweet* one the Condition. He will not say, *I will give thee this Aloes, on Condition thou wilt take this Sugar:* but contrary; *I will give thee the sweeter, if thou wilt take the bitter.*

In Christs *Ends*, and *Works*, 1. We naturally are more willing of that which makes for our selves directly, then of that which makes directly for the *Honour of God* and the *Redeemer*. We prefer our own *Ends* before *Gods Glory:* And therefore *Christ* hath so ordered the Condition of his Promises, that unless we will take him in his Relations of Dignity as *King* and *Lord*, and will make the *Glory* and *Pleasing of God* our *principal End*, we shall have none of him, or his *Saving Benefits*. For he came not to fulfil our selfish desires, but to fetch us off from our selves, and recover us to God, that he might have his own. And if we will not have our All in *God*, we shall have nothing. 2. And Naturally we are willing, as to our own benefits, to be pardoned, and freed from the *Curse of the Law*, and the *flames of Hell*, and *Natural death*, and punishment: And therefore we are thus far Naturally willing of free *Justification*. But we are unwilling to let go the seeming profit, and credit, and pleasure of sin, and to deny the flesh, forsake the world; and we are averse to rhe *Spiritual felicity* of the *Saints*, and to the *Holiness* of *heart*, and *life*, that is the way to it; And therefore *Christ* hath most wisely so ordered it, in the tenour of his Promises, that our *Repentance* and *Faith* shall be the Condition of our *Justificati n* and deliverance from *death* and *Hell*: And this *Faith* is the believing in him, and Accepting him entirely in his whole Office, to *Sanctifie* us, and *Rule* us, as well as to Justifie us: And thus we must take him wholly, or we shall have *none of him*. And the Accepting him as our *Teacher*, and *Sanctifier*, and King, is as much (at least the Condition of our *Justification*, and *Pardon*, and deliverance from *Hell*,) as the Accepting him as a Justifier

fier of us is. He that had the Power in his own hands, and that made the free *Promise*, or *Deed of Gift*, hath put in such Conditions, as his own Wisdom saw best; and they are such as suit most congruously to *all* his Ends: even the *Glory of God* in all his *Attributes*, and the *Redeemers Glory*, and our own, and most full and free *Salvation*: And on his Conditions must we have his *Benefits*, or we shall never have them.

7. Lastly, Understand and Note, that the *Means* which *Christ* hath resolved on for *Teaching* and *Ruling* us, ordinarily, are *his Word*, *his Ministers*, and his *Spirit*, all must be submitted to together, where they may be had, and none of them laid by, by separation. His *Word* is the *Grammer*, or *Book*, as it were, that we must learn: His *Ministers* must teach us this *Book*: And his *Spirit* (who in the *Apostles*, and *Prophets* indited and sealed it,) must inwardly teach us, by *powerful Illumination*. The *Word is Gods Laws*; the *Ministers* are his *Embassadors*, or *Heraulds* to proclaim them, and command obedience in his *Name*; and his *Spirit* must open mens hearts to entertain them. The *Word* is *Gods Seed*; the *Ministers* are the *Husbandmen*, or *Servants* that sow it; and the *Spirit* must give the increase; without which, our planting, and watering will do nothing. He therefore that takes *Christ*, for his *Master*, and *King*, must resolve to be taught, and ruled by his established means, even by his *Word*, and *Ministers*, and *Spirit* conjunct; For he that *refuseth* and *despiseth* these, doth *refuse* and *despise Christ*; and consequenly the *Father* that sent him, *Luke* 10. 16. 1 *Thes.* 4. 8. For it was never the meaning of *Christ* when he became the *Teacher* and *King* of the *Church*, to stay on Earth, and personally, and visibly to teach them himself; but these three are his means, which all must submit to, that will be his subjects and *Disciples*. And he that despiseth the *Word*, shall be destroyed, *Prov.* 13. 13. He that will not have the *Word Ministry*,

stry, and *Spirit* teach him, will not have *Christ* teach him: and he that refuseth to be ruled by these three, shall be destroyed as a Rebel against *Christ* himself, *Luke* 19. 27. Still it is supposed that *Ministers* must *Teach*, and *Rule* according to this Word.

And the *Society in which Christ* will *Teach* and govern us, is his *Church*; As members therefore of the *Universal Church*, and in *Communion* with his *Particular Church*, where we live and have opportunity, we must wait on *Christ* for his *Teaching* and *Benefits*. For this is his *School*, where his *Disciples* must diligently attend and learn.

Lay all this together, and this is the sum; The Object of *Justifying*, *Saving Faith*, is One only undivided *Christ*, one in *Person*, but of *two Natures*, *God*, and *Man*; in Office the *Mediator* between *God* and *man*, who hath already done the work of *Satisfaction*, and *Merit*, and is authorized further to bestow the *Benefits*: By the *Gospel Grant* he hath given himself as *Head*, and *Husband*, *Teacher*, *King*, and *Saviour*, to all that will entirely and heartily accept him; and with himself he giveth *Justification* by the promise, *Sanctification* by the *Word*, *Ministry*, and *Spirit*, and *final Absolution*, and *Everlasting Life*. If ever then you will have *Christ*, and *Life*, you must accept him in all these Essentials of his *Person*, and *Offices*, and that to the *Ends* which his *Redemption* was intended for: you must be willing to be *Sanctified* by him, as well as to be *Justified*: You must at once unfeignedly become his *Disciples*, his *Subjects*, his *Members*, if you would become his *saved ones*. You must consent, that as your *Teacher*, and your *Lord*, he shall *Teach* and *Rule* your heart, and life, by his *Word*, *Ministers*, and *Spirit*, in Communion with his Church. No bar or exception must be put in, nor reservation made against any one of these parts of his *Office*. If you yield not to those parts of his *Saving work*, that tend but to the complative growth, you sin, and deprive your selves of the *Benefit*: but if you yield not to those that must

must make you truly *sanctified*, and *justified Men*, you cannot be saved. The Essentials of *Christ's Person*, and Office, do constitute him the *Christ*, and if he be not received in all those *Essentials*, he is not received as *Christ*.

And thus I have given you the Sum of the *Gospel*, and the Description of *Faith*, and true *Christianity* in this Direction, for a right closing with the *Lord Jesus Christ*. And experience of most that I discourse with, perswades me to think this Direction of great necessity, and to intreat you throughly to peruse and consider it; I find abundance of ignorant People, that talk much of *Christ*, but know very little of him; that can scarce tell us whether he be God or Man, or which Person in the *Trinity* he is, nor to what *end* he was incarnate, and died, nor what *Relation* he stands in to us, or what use he is of, or what he now is, or what he is engaged to do for us. But if we ask them about their *hopes of Salvation*, they almost overlook the *Redemption* by *Christ*, and tell us of nothing but *God's Mercies*, and their own *good Meanings*, and *Endeavours*. And I am afraid too many Professors of *Piety*, (do look) almost all, at the *Natural part of Religion*, and the mending of their own *Hearts* and *Lives*, (and I would this were better done) while they forget the supernatural part, and little are affected with the *infinite Love of God in Christ*. I desire such to consider these things: 1. You overlook the Sum of your *Religion*, which is *Christ crucified*, besides whom *Paul* desired to know nothing. 2. You overlook the *Fountain of your own Life*, and the Author of your Supplies; and you strive in vain for *Sanctification*, or *Justification*, if you seek them not from a *crucified Christ*. 3. You leave undone the principal part of your work, and live like *Moral Heathens*, while you have the Name of *Christians*. Your daily Work is to *study God* in the Face of his *Son*, and to labour with all *Saints* to comprehend the *height, and breadth, and length, and depth*, and to know the *Love of Christ*, which passeth

seth knowledge, *Eph.* 3. 18, 19. All your Graces should be daily quickned, and set a work by the Life of Faith, in the Contemplation of the Redeemer, and his blessed Work. This is the Weight that must set all the Wheels a going. You do God no Service, that he can accept, if you serve him not in this Gospel-work, of loving, trusting, and admiring, and praising him in the *Redeemer*, and for his *Redemption*. 4. And so you rob God of the principal part of his Glory, which you are to give him; which is for this most *glorious Work of our Redemption*. I pray you read over again the *Ends* of this Work, which I laid down in the beginning of this Direction. 5. Moreover, you rob your selves of your principal Comfort, which must all come in by living upon Christ. 6. And you harden the *Antinomians* and *Libertines*, and tempt Men to their Extreams, that run from us as *Legalists*, and as Men that savour not the Doctrine of *Free Grace*, and are not of a *Gospel Spirit* and *Conversation*. I would our great neglect of Christ, had not been a Snare to these mistaken Souls, and a Stumbling-block in their way.

O Sirs, if a Thought of your Hearts, if a Word of your Mouths, have not some relation to Christ, suspect it, yea reject it. Call it not a *Sermon*, or a *Prayer*, or a *Duty*, that hath nothing of Christ in it. Though the pure Godhead be your principal End, yet there is no way to this End, but by Christ: and tho' Love, which is exercised on that *End*, must animate all your Graces and Duties, as they are *Means* to that *End*; yet *Faith* hath Love in it, or else it is not the *Christian Faith*; and *Christ* is the *Object* of your *Faith* and *Love*; and your perfect *everlasting Love* will be animated by *Christ*: For your *Love* and *Praise* will be to him that was slain, and Redeemed us to *God* by his *Blood*, out of every *Kindred*, *Tongue*, and *Nation*, and made us *Kings* and *Priests* to God. So much for the Fifth Direction.

Direct.

Direct. VI. The next Direction which I would give you for a through Conversion, is this: *See that the Flesh be throughly mortified, and your Hearts be throughly taken off the World, and all its Pleasures, and Profits, and Honours, and that the Root of your fleshly Interest prevail not at the Heart, and that you think not of reconciling God and the World, as if you might secure your Interest in both.*

This is a very common cause of the deceit and destruction of such as verily think they are converted. It is the very nature and business of *true Conversion*, to *turn* Mens Hearts from the *Flesh*, and from the *World* to *God*, and from an earthly and seeming Happiness, to a *heavenly real everlasting Happiness*. And when Men are affrighted into some kind of *Religiousness*, and yet never learn'd to deny themselves, and never mortified their *fleshly Mind*, but the love of this World is still the chiefest Principle at their *Hearts*; and so go on in Profession of *Godliness*, with a secret reserve, that they will look as well as they can to their outward Prosperity, whatever become of their *Religion*, and they will have no more to do with the Matters of another World, then may stand with their bodily safety in this World; these are the miserable deluded *Hypocrites*, whose hopes will prove as the giving up the Ghost; whom *Christ* will disown in their greatest Extremities, after all their *seeming Religiousness*. O Sirs, look to this as ever you would be happy. It's an easie, it's a common, its a most dangerous thing, to set upon a Course of *outward Piety*, and yet keep the *World* next your *Hearts*, and take it still as a great part of your Felicity, and secretly to love your former *Lusts*, while you seem to be converted. The *Heart* is so deceitful, that you have great cause to watch it narrowly in this point: It will closely cherish the Love of the *World*, and your *fleshly Pleasures*, when it seems to renounce them, and when your Tongue can speak contemptuously of them.

them. It was not for nothing, that *Christ* would have the First-fruits of his *Gospel-Church* (who were to be the Example of their Successors) to sell all, and lay it down at the Feet of his Apostles: And it is his standing Rule, That *whoever he be, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be his Disciple*, Luke 14. 33. In estimation, affection, and resolution, it must be forsaken by all that will be saved; and also in Practice, when ever God calls us to it. You can have but one Happiness; if you will needs have it in this *World*, in the *contenting* of your *Flesh*, there is no hope of having it also in *another World*, in the *Fruition of God*. If you think not *God* and *Heaven* enough for you, and cannot let go the *Prosperity* of the *Flesh* for them, you must let go all your hopes of them. God will not halve it with the World in your Hearts, nor part Stakes with the Flesh; much less will he be below them, and take their Leavings: *Heaven* will not be theirs, that set not by it more than *Earth*. God will not call that *Love* to him *sincere*, which is not a *Superlative Love*, and able to make you even hate all those things that would draw away your Affections and Obedience from him, *Luke* 14. 26, 27. There's no talk of serving God and Mammon, and compounding you a Happiness of Earth and Heaven. Do therefore as Christ bids you, *Luke* 14. 28, 29, 30.

Sit down and *count what it must cost you, if you will be saved*; and on what rates it is that you must follow Christ. Can you voluntarily, for the Love of him, and the hope of Glory, take up your Cross, and follow him in *Poverty*, in *Losses*, in *Reproaches*, thro' *Scorns*, and *Scourgings*, and *Prisons*, and *Death?* Do you value his Loving-kindness better than Life? *Psal.* 63. 3. Can you deny your Eyes, and your Appetites their Desires? Can you consent to be vile in the Eyes of Men, and to tame your own Flesh, and keep it in subjection, and live a Flesh-displeasing Life, that having *suffered* with Christ, you may also be *glorified* with

with him? *Rom.* 8. 17. If you cannot consent to these Terms, you cannot be *Christians*, nor you cannot be saved. If you *must* needs be *rich*, or *must* be *honourable*; yea, if you *must* needs save your *Estates*, or *Liberties*, or *Lives*, it's past all question, you *must* needs let go *Christ* and *Glory*: If you *must* needs have the *World*, you must needs lose your *Souls*. If you *must* have your good Things here, you must not have them hereafter too, but be tormented when Christ's Sufferers are comforted, *Luke* 16. 25. These hopes of purveying for the *Flesh* as long as they can, and then of being saved, when they can stay here no longer, is it that hath deceived many a thousand, to their undoing. It's a strange thing to see how the World doth blind very knowing Men, and how unacquainted these *Hypocrites* are with their own *Hearts*. What a confident Profession of downright *Godliness* many of them will make, yea of some extraordinary height in *Religion*, when nothing is so dear to them as their present Prosperity, and *God* hath not near so much Interest in them as the *Flesh*? What Contrivances some of them make for *Riches*, or rising in the *World*? And how tender others are of their Honour with Men; and how tenacious they are of their *Mammon of Unrighteousness*; and how much *Money*, and *Great Men*, can do with them: And most of them pamper their Flesh, and serve it in a cleanlier Way of Religiousness, even as much, tho' not so disgracefully, and grossly, as Drunkards and Whoremongers do, in a more discernable Sensuality. If the Times do but change, and countenance any Error, how small an Argument will make their Judgments bend with the Times: If *Truth* or *Duty* must cost them dear: O how they will shift, and stretch, and wriggle, to prove *Truth* to be no *Truth*, and *Duty* to be no *Duty*; and no Argument is strong enough to satisfie them, when the Flesh doth but say, *It's bitter, it's dangerous, it may be undoing.*

It's none of my meaning, that any should needlesly run into suffering, or cross their Governours, and themselves, through a Spirit of Pride, Singularity and Contradiction: But that Men should think themselves truly *Religious*, that keep such *Reserves* for their fleshly Interest, and shew by the very drift of their *Lives*, that they are *Worldlings*, and never felt what it was to be *crucified to the World*, and deny themselves, but are Religious on this Supposition only that it may stand with their *Worldly Ends*, or at least not undo them in the *World*; this is a lamentable hypocritical Self-deceit. When God hath so plainly said, *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*, 1 John 2. 15. Nay, that the Neighbourhood, and all the Country that know them should ring of the Worldliness of some, that think themselves *good Christians*; and yet they will not see it themselves: What a cheating binding thing is the World?

Well Sirs, if you will be *Christians*, count what it must cost you: And if you will be *Heirs of Heaven* away with the *World*: Cast it out of your *Hearts*. And if your Hands must yet trade in it, yet trade not for it: Use it for *God*, but enjoy it not for it self. Take your selves as Strangers here, and look on the World as a desolate Wilderness; through which, in the *Communion* of the *Militant Saints*, you may safely travel on to *Heaven*; but do not make it your *Home*, nor take it for the smallest part of your *Felicity*. To be *sanctified* without *Mortification*, is a palpable Contradiction. Be at a point with all things below, if you will groundedly hope for the *heavenly Inheritance*. But I shall purposely forbear to enlarge this any further, because I have preached, and written a Treatise on this Subject: Which I desire you to peruse.

Direct

Direct. VII. My next Direction is this: *If you would be truly Converted, be sure that you make an absolute Resignation of your selves, and all that you have to God.*

This is the very Form and Life of *Sanctification*. To be *sanctified*, is to be separated, in *Heart*, *Life*, and *Profession*, from all other *Masters*, and *Ends*, to *God*. When the Heart that was set upon the *World*, and *Flesh*, is separated from them, and inclined to *God* by the Power of *Love*, and devoted to him, to serve and please him; this is indeed a *sanctified Heart*: And when the *Life* that before was spent in the Service of *Satan*, the *World*, and the *Flesh*, is now taken off them, and spent, as to the drift, and course of it, in the Service of *God*, for the pleasing and glorifying of him, from the Impulse of Love, this is indeed a *holy Life*. And herein consisteth the very nature of our *Sanctity*. And when a Man doth but *profess* to renounce the *Devil*, the *World*, and the *Flesh*, and to give up his *Heart* and *Life to God*, this is a *Profession of Holiness*. *God* is both on the Title of *Creation*, *Preservation*, and *Redemption*, our absolute *Lord*, or *Owner*, and we are not our own, but his: And therefore we must *give to God*, the *things that are God's*, and glorifie him in our *Souls* and *Bodies*, which are his, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. As we are his own, so he will have his own, and be served by his own: Do not imagine that you have any Title to your selves, or Propriety in your selves; but without any more adoe, make a full, unreserved, absolute resignation of your selves, of your Understandings, and of your Wills, of your Bodies, and of your Names, and of every Penny-worth of your Estates to *God*, from whom, and for whom you have them. Think not that you have power to dispose of your selves, or of any thing that you have. Ask not *Flesh* and *Blood*, what *Life* you shall lead, or what *Mind* or *Will* you shall be of: But ask *God*, to whom you do belong.

Ask not your carnal selves, what you shall do with any of your *Estates*, but ask *God*, and then ask *Conscience*, *which is the way that God would have me use it in?* That is, *which way may I use it to be most serviceable to God?* And that resolve upon. No Service that you do to *God*, will prove you sanctified, unless you have *heartily* and *absolutely* given up, and devoted your selves to him: And he that gives up himself, must needs give up all that he hath with himself. For he cannot keep it for himself (ultimately), when even himself is given up to *God*. Tho' you be not bound to give all that you have to the *Poor*, nor all to the *Church*, nor to deny your own *Bodies*, or *Families* their *due Supplies*, yet must it *all* be given up to *God*, even that which you make use of for your selves, and *Families*: For as you are given up to *God* your selves, so you must feed your selves as his, and cloath your selves, and your Families as his, to fit your selves, and them for his Service, and not as your own, for the satisfying of your *Flesh*. Thus it is that all comes to be *pure* to the *pure*, *sanctified* to them that are themselves first *sanctified*; because when you feed your self, you do but feed a *Servant of God*, that is consecrated to him, and separated from things common and unclean. And even as the *Tythes*, and *Offerings*, that were given for the Food and Maintenance of the Priests and Levites, were called the *Lord's Portion*, and *holy to the Lord*, because they were *their* Portion that were separated to his *Altar*. Even so that which is necessary to fit you for *Gods Service*, while you use it to that very end, is *sanctified* in your *Sanctification*, and is *holy to God*; for all his *Saints* are a *Holy Nation*, a *Royal Priesthood*, to offer up acceptable Sacrifice to him. And thus, *Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, you must do all to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, and therefore to him must be the Glory for ever*, Rom. 11. 36. *God* who is the *End* of your Hearts and Lives, must be the *End* of every

Action

Action of them unleſs you will ſtep out of the way of *Order*, and *Safety*, and *Holineſs*. For every Action that is not *from God*, and *by God*, and *for God*, is contrary to the nature of true *Sanctification*. If then you would be *Chriſtians* indeed, be heartily willing that *God* ſhould have his own. Underſtand what an excellent Honour, and Priviledge, and Happineſs it is to you to be his. If his Right to you will not move you, let your own neceſſity, and benefit at leaſt move you, to give up your ſelves, and all you have to *God*. Bring your Hearts to the Bar, and plead the *Cauſe of God* with them, and convince them of *God's* Title to them, and how ſinfully they have robbed him of his own all this while: Have your Days and Hours, your Wealth and Intereſt, been uſed purpoſely for *God* as his own! O what abundance be there, that in *Word*, and *confident Profeſſion*, do give up themſelves, and all to *God*, and yet in the uſe of themſelves, and all, do plainly ſhew that its no ſuch matter; but they diſſembled with *God*, and yet never knew ſo much by themſelves. How little do they uſe for *God*, when they have with ſeeming Devotion reſigned all to him? If a *Lord*, or *Knight*, or *Gentleman*, of 4000 *l.* or 3000 *l.* a Year, or 400 *l.* or 300 *l.* a Year, were to ſhew the Accompts of all his Expences, how much of all this ſhould you find expended for *God*, when they have acknowledged that all this is his? One would think by their Lives, that they look to be ſaved by *robbing God*, and confeſſing the robbery, by ſaying that all is *God's*, while they allow him next to nothing.

The devoted, reſigned, *ſanctified Soul*, hath the true Principle of all Obedience, and that which will do much to repel all Temptations, and carry him through the greateſt Straits and Tryals. If I am not my own, I need not be over ſolicitous for my ſelf, but may expect that he that owneth me ſhould care for me; nor do I need to uſe any ſinful Shifts for my own preſervation. If I have nothing of my own,

what need I to sin for the saving of any thing? What need I to venture upon *unwarrantable Means*, to preserve either Credit or Goods, or Life? It is *Self* and *Own*, that are the Root of all Sin, the Heart of the Old Man, and the Seed of *Hell*: Nothing else is pleaded against *God*, and our *Salvation*. If the Flesh would have you abuse God's Creatures, you must remember they are not your *own*. If the Devil would entice you to sin against *God*, either for the getting, or keeping of any Creature, it would easily repel the Temptations, were you but rightly sensible, that nothing is your *own*: For God hath no need that you should sin, to get *Riches*, or *Honours* for him. If you are called to let go your Houses, or Lands, or Friends, or Lives, or to deliver up your Bodies to the Flames, did you but rightly take them as none of your own, how easie would it be! You can be content that another Man give his *Goods*, or *Life* it self to *God*, whenever *God* requireth it; but your *own* you cannot be content to part with, and that because it is your *own*. But if you had rightly resigned all to God, and took not your selves, or any thing for your *own*, but look'd upon your selves, and all as God's, the greatest *Works* of *Obedience*, or *Suffering*, would be much more easie to you; and you would have little difficulty, or hindrance in your way. *Self-denial* is but *Sanctification* it self, denominated from the wrong End and Principle, which we forsake. And where Self is denied, and dead, what is there left to draw us from God, or stand up against him, in any part of our Lives? So much Interest as Self hath in you, so much the *World* and the *Devil* hath in you. And nothing is more proper to a miserable Hypocrite, than *deep Reserves* of Life, or worldly Things to themselves, while they seem to give up all to God.

O *happy Soul*, that is wrought to this Sincerity, by the *Spirit of Grace!* to say unfeignedly, *O Lord, I devote and resign my self wholly unto thee! I am not my own, nor desire any further to be, than to be thine: I have*

have nothing that is my own, nor desire to have any thing that shall be thine. Happy and truly wise is that Man, that keeps as constant and faithful a Reckoning, how he lays out himself, and all that he hath for God, as a faithful Steward doth of his Receivings and Layings out for his Master's use. Every Penny that is reserved from God, is the Fuel of Sin, and a Sacrifice to the Devil and the Flesh; and if he be pardoned to the truly penitent, by the *Sacrifice of Christ*, that's no Thanks to us, that would else have made it the *Fuel of Hell*. *God* is not so careless of us, or his Mercies, but that he keeps an exact account of all that we have from him, and will require an account of our improvement of all: Not only requiring his *own* again, but his *own* with advantage, *Mat.* 25. 27. Why else did he give us such leisure and ability to improve it? I can never forget what a sinful thought was once in my mind, which I will venture to confess, because it may possibly be the Case of others, that so they may beware: *Hearing of some that use to lay by the Tenth-part of their yearly Comings-in, for charitable Uses, I purposed to do so too; and thought it a fair Proportion.* But since I have perceived what a vile and wicked thought that was, to offer to cut out a Scantling for God, or give him a *limited Share* of his *own*; or say, *That so much he shall have, and no more.* Tho' we cannot say, that God must have all in *any one kind of Service only*; either *only for the Church*, or *only for the Poor*, or *only for Publick Uses*; yet must we resolve, that in *one way or other* he must have *all*; and the particular Proportions to the *Poor*, or *Church*, or other Uses, must be assigned by truly sanctified Prudence, considering which way it may be most serviceable to God. I must relieve my own Family, or Kindred, if they want; but not because they are my own, but because God hath commanded me, and so hath made it a part of my Obedience. But if I see where I may do more Service to God, by relieving a Stranger, and that God doth more require it, I must

yet prefer them before all the Kindred that I have in the World. When the *Christian Pattern* was set up by the *Primitive Church*, Acts 2. & 4. they sold all, and laid down the whole Price at the Apostles Feet; which was not distributed to their natural Kindred only, but to all the poor Christians that had no other relation to them, even as every one had need. And as it is the loving of our Spiritual Brethren in Christ, that is made the sign of our translation from Death to Life, so is it the relieving of Christ in these his Members; that is, the relieving them, because they are his Members, that is made the very matter of our Cause in the last Judgment, and the ground of the Sentence of Life or Death, *Mat.* 25. I must provide for my own Body, and you must provide for your Children; but that is (as I said before) not as I am my *own*, nor as your Children are your *own*; but as I am a *Servant of Christ*, that must be supported in his Service, or as your selves, and yours, are put under your Care and Duty by *God*. So that I may give it to my self, or others, when I can truly say, *I do but use it principally for God, and think that the principal Service I can do him by it.* But I may neither take to my self, nor give to any that are nearest to me, any more than God commandeth, or his Service doth require. When you and yours have your *Daily Bread*, (which also must be used for him) you must not go to Flesh and Blood, but to God, to ask which way you shall dispose of the remainder. This is a strange Doctrine to the unsanctified World; but that is because they are unsanctified. And it is a Doctrine that a worldly Hypocrite is loth to believe and understand; but that is because of Carnality and Hypocrisie, that always deals with God, like *Ananias* and *Saphira*, lying to the Holy Ghost, and giving God but half, (and few so much as half, when they daily confess that all is from him, and should be his, and pretend to be wholly devoted to him. There are few Men so bad, but will spare God something, rather

rather than to go *Hell*? But indeed this is not to devote it to *God*, but to use it for themselves, thinking by their Sacrifices, to stop the mouth of *Justice*, and to please *God* by a part, when they have displeased him in the rest. I much fear (and not without apparent cause) that abundance among us, that think themselves *Christians*, do *worship*, and *serve God*, but as some *Indians* are said to offer sacrifice to the *Devil*, not for any *love* they have to him, or his service, but for *fear* he should *hurt them*. And there are few Hypocrites but will pretend it is from very love.

O Sirs, its a greater matter to resign and give up your selves, and all you have to *God*, and heartily to quit all claim to your selves, and all things, then many a thousand self-deluding professors do imagine. Many look at this but as some high extraordinary strain of *Piety*. And the *Papists* almost appropriate it to a few that live in *Monastical orders*, when indeed the sincerity of this Resignation, and Dedication, is the very *sincerity of Sanctification it self*.

And let me tell you, that the *Unfeigned Convert* that attains to this, hath not only pluckt up the *root of sin*, (though all of us have too many strings of it left) nor only stopt up the spring of temptation, and got the surest evidence of his uprightness, but also is got himself into the safest and most *comfortable state*. For when he hath absolutely resigned himself, and all to *God*, how confidently may he expect that *God* should accept him, and use him as his *own*? and how comfortably may he commit himself and his cause, and all *good affairs to God*, as knowing that *God* cannot be negligent and careless of his *own*? Its an argument that may make us confident of success, when we can say as *David*, *Psal.* 119. 94. *I am thine, save me.* Isa. 63. 19. Even *Christ* himself doth ingratiate his *Elect* with the *Father* on this account, *Joh.* 17. 6. 9. 10. *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me: I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me: for they are*

thine; *And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.* And indeed by resigning all to *God* it is the more our *own*; that is, we have unspeakably more of the benefit of it, and so there is no way to make it our *own*, but by quitting it absolutely up to *God*: This is the *mystery* that the world will not learn, but *God* will teach it all that shall be *saved* by the *Spirit*, and by *Faith*, *Matth.* 16. 24, 25, 26. *Then Jesus said to his Disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me: For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.* Methinks a man that hath *time*, and *strength*, and *money*, should long to be disbursing all for *God*, that he might put it in the surest hands, and it may be out of danger; yea that it may be set to the most honest and profitable usury. For when *God* hath it from the dedication of an upright heart, it is sure: but till *God* have it, it is in hazzard and all that *he* hath not is lost, and worse then lost. When it is in our hands, *thieves* may steal it, *bad Servants*, or *unadvised Children* may consume it, and our own *thievish flesh* may steal it worst of all, and consume it on our *lusts*; or if our Children consume it not, *their* Children may: Or if they save it, they may lose it most of all, by feeding their pride and fleshly minds by it: But if once it be in *Gods hands*, it is safe. You can make no comfortable account of one penny, nor of one hours time, unless you can tell *God* that he had it himself; that you used it for him: Or that you live to him in the *main*, and that the rest is pardoned. O that those Parents understood this *Doctrine*, that had rather strengthen the fetters, and temptations of their Children with it, and help them into that state which few are saved in, then to devote and use their estates for *God!* Though *Christ* hath told them how hardly the *Rich* are saved, and how few such come to *Heaven*, yet what care is taken to leave their Children rich, and how little to further the *Work of God*, or their own

own accounts, that they may hear the *Well done good and faithful Servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things: I will make thee Ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Matth. 25. 21, 23.

O Sirs if you would be good husbands, and provident indeed for your *Souls*, see that your *hearts* prove not false to you in this, and make no secret reserves for your selves, but that *God* have your selves first, and all things with your selves; as *Christ* first gives himself to you, and all things with himself, *Rom.* 8. 32. Never think your *hearts* right, but when they can readily say, *We are not our own*, 1 Cor. 6, 19. Think not that you come aright to *God* in any duty, if you do not heartily devote *your selves* to him, and intreat him to accept you, as wholly his, who neither are, nor desire to be your own: and intreat him accordingly to use you for himself. Say not that any thing is your *Own* that you possess, *Acts* 4. 32. in respect to *God, and a Communion of Charity*; though it be your *own* (as a Talent that *God* doth intrust you with) in respect of *men*, by *a Legal Propriety*.

And then trust *God* boldly, for you and his *Own*: Serve him *chearfully*, and draw neer him *believingly*, for you are his *Own*. In poverty, sickness, temptations, and the approach of *death*, rejoice in him confidently, for you are his *Own*. Into his hands commend your *departing Spirits*, for they are his *Own*. What reason of distrustful fears can you now have? Do you fear lest *God* will yet hate you? why remember that *no man ever yet hated his own flesh*, Ephes. 5. 29. Nay for shame, think not the *blessed God* to be worse then the *wicked world*; and *Christ* saith of the world, *Joh.* 15. 19. *If ye were of the world*, the *world would love his own*. And will not *God* then Love his *Own* do you think? And if you are willing to be his *Own*, *Christ* is certainly willing that you *should* be his *Own*; and will *Own* all that *Own*, not themselves, but *him*. *He calleth his Own sheep by name*, and

and leadeth them out; and when he putteth forth his Own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice, Joh. 10. 3, 4. *And* Joh. 13 1. *Having loved his Own which are in the world, to the End he loved them.*

If you are but truly willing to be his *Own* People, he is certainly willing to be your *Own Saviour* and your *Own God*. Not that you can have such a propriety in him, as he hath in you. But in these *Relations* he will be your *Own*; and *Glory*, and *Help*, and *Salvation* shall be yours. And you may well conclude, that *God, even our own God, shall bless us*, Psal. 6. 7, 6. There is much comfort may be fetch from that in *Luke* 15. 31. though Parables must not be stretcht too far: *Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*

And upon this ground it is that we have the greater encouragement, to believe that *God* accepteth of our very *Infants themselves*; because it is his *Will* that they should be *Devoted, engaged, and dedicated* to him: And that which he would have us dedicate and offer to him, he will surely accept in that Relation to which he would have it offered.

I beseech you therefore remember what it is to be *truly converted*: It is to be called from *things common* and *unclean* and *separated to God*; It is to be brought *nigh to him*, as the Children of his *Houshold*, that are themselves, and all that they have in his hands: It is to be taken off your *Selves*, and your *Own*, and to lose your *selves*, and all you have in *God*, by the most gainful lots; lest indeed you lose your selves, and all, while you perswade your selves you *save* or *gain*. It is a taking *God* in *Christ* for your *All*, and so being content to have Nothing but him, and for him. It is a changing of your old Master *self*, for *God* a better Master: and your old work, which was *self-seeking*, and *self pleasing*, to *self-denial*, and to the seeking, and pleasing of *God*. See now that this be done, and that your *treacherous hearts* lose

hide nothing for themselves, as *Rachel* under pretence of necessity, hid her *Idols*, but say, *Here I am, to be thine, O Lord, and to do thy Will.*

More would have been said on this point, but that I have written of it already, in a Sermon on 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. of the *Absolute Dominion of Christ*, and our *self-resignation*; which I desire you here to peruse, to set this further home.

Direct. VIII. My next advice that the Work of *Conversion* may not miscarry, is this: *Take heed, lest you mistake meer change of your Opinions, and outward profession, and behaviour, for a true Saving change.*

Wicked Opinions must be changed, and so must evil professions, and outward practices: But if no more be changed, you are wicked still. I have great cause to fear that this is the most common damning deceit, that useth to befal professors of *Godliness*, and that its the case of most Hypocrites, in the *Church*. A man may be brought to hold any *Truth* in *Scripture* as an *Opinion*; and so far be sound, and Orthodox; and yet never be indeed a *sound Believer*, nor have his *Heart* possessed with the *life* and *power* of those *Sacred Truths*. Its one thing to have a mans *Opinion* changed, and another thing to have his Heart renewed, by the change of his *Practical Estimation*, *Resolutions*, and *Dispositions*. Its one thing to turn from loose prophane *Opinions*, to strict *Opinions*; and think the *Godly* are indeed in the right, and as their case and way is safest and best: and its another thing to be made *One* of them in *Newness*, and *Spirituality of heart*, and *life*. A lively *Faith* differs much from *Opinion*: and that which is in *unsanctified men*, which we call *Faith*, and is a kind of *Faith* indeed, it is but a meer *Opinionative Faith*: I call it an *Opinionative Faith*, because it differs from *Saving Faith*, much like as *Opinion* doth from *Knowledge*. Meerly *speculative* it is not; for some intention of practice there is: But the *Practical Intention* of such persons, differs from the Predominant

minant intensions of the *Sanctified*, even as their *Opinionative Faith* differs from the *Saving Faith*.

And it is no wonder if there be abundance of these *Opinionative believers* in the world: For the *Truths of God* have very great evidence, especially some of them; and men are yet men, and consequently *reasonable Creatures*; and therefore have some aptitude to discern the *Evidence of Truth*: Some *Truths* will compel Assent even from the unwilling: Many a thousand *ungodly men* believe that to be True, which they would not have to be *True*, if they could help it, because they do not heartily take it to be Good in respect to themselves. *Truth* as *Truth*, is the *Natural Object* of the *Understanding*; though the same *Truths* as seeming evil to them, may be hated by them that are forced to Assent to it. I know that sin hath much blinded mens *understandings*, and that the natural man Receiveth not the things of the *Spirit*, because they are foolishness to him, and must be spiritually discerned, 1. *Cor* 2. 14. But though he cannot *Savingly* receive them without the *Special* illumination of the *Spirit*, nor *Opinionatively* receive them without a *common* illumination of the *Spirit*, yet he may have this Opinionative conviction, and answerable reformation, by the common *Grace of the Spirit*, without the *Special Grace*. An unsanctified man may have something more then *Nature* in him: and every unregenerate man is not *meerly*, or *only* Natural. Many are far convinced, that are from being *Savingly Converted*. I can make you know that you shall die, that you must part with all your wealth, and *fleshly pleasures*, and divers such *Truths*, whether you will or not. And one of these *Truths*, doth let in many more, that depend upon them. So that as dark as the minds of *natural men* are, they yet lie open to many *wholsom Truths*.

And as the *Understanding* is thus far open to *Conviction*, so the *Will* it self, which is the *Heart* of the *old man*, will far sooner yield to the changing of your

your *Opinions*, than to the *saving change* of *Heart* and *Life*. It is not the bare *Opinion*, that your fleshly Interest doth fight against, but the *Power* and *Practice* of Godliness is it, and *Opinions* as they lead to these. It's one thing to be of *Opinion*, that *Conversion* is necessary, that *Sin* must be *forsaken*, and *God* preferred before *all the World*: And it's another thing to be *indeed converted*, and to *forsake Sin*, and to prefer *God* before the World. It is a far easier matter to convince a *Worldling*, that he *should not* love the *World*, than to cure him of his *worldly Love*; and to convince a *Drunkard*, that he should leave his *Drunkenness*, and the *Whoremonger*, that he should abhor his *Lusts*, than to bring them to do these things, which they are convinced of. It will cost them dear (as the Flesh accounts it) to deny themselves, and cast away the Sin: But it costeth not so dear to take up the *Opinion* that these things *should* be done. It will cost them dear to be down-right for *God*, and *practically Religious*; but they can take up an Opinion, that *Godliness* is the best and necessary Course, at a cheaper rate. Strict *Practices* pinch the Flesh, but strict *Opinions* may stand with its *liberty*. O what abundance of our poor Neighbours would go to *Heaven*, that are now in the way to *Hell*, if an Opinion that *Godliness* is the wisest Course, would serve the turn. If instead of *Conversion*, *God* would take up with an *Opinion* that they ought to *turn*; and if instead of a *holy heavenly Life*, *God* would accept of an *Opinion*, that such are the *happiest Men*, that live such a Life; and if instead of *Temperance* and *Meekness*, and *Self-denial*, and *forgiving Wrongs*, *God* would accept of an *Opinion*, and *Confession*, that they should be temperate and meek, and self-denying, and should forbear others, and forgive them; then O what abundance would be *saved*, that are now in little *hope of Salvation!* If instead of a diligent *Life of Holiness*, and *good Works*, it would serve turn to lie still, and be of a good *Opinion*, that Men should strive, and labour

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for *Salvation*, and lay out all they have for *God*, how happy then were our *Towns* and *Countries*, in comparison of what they are!

I am afraid this deceit will be the undoing of many, that they take a change of their *Opinions*, for a true *Conversion*. Have not some of you been formerly of the mind, that the best way is to *eat* and *drink*, and be *merry*, and venture your *Souls*, and follow your worldly Business, and never trouble your selves with any deep and searching Thoughts about your *Spiritual State*, or your *Salvation?* Have you not thought that this *diligent Godliness*, is but a needless Strictness and Preciseness? And have you not since been convinced of your *Error*, and perceived, that this is the wisest Course, which you before thought to be needless, and thereupon have betaken you to the Company of the *Godly*, and set upon a Course of outward Duties? And now you think that you are made *New Creatures*, and that *this* is *Regeneration*, and the Work is done. I fear least this be all the *Conversion* that many forward Professors are acquainted with! *But woe to them that have no more.*

And because the face of our present times, doth plainly shew the commonness and prevalency of this *Disease*, and because it is a matter of so great concernment to you, I shall here give you (but as briefly as I well can) some Signs by which a *true Conversion* may be known, from this meer *Opinionative Change*.

1. The *true Convert* is brought to an *unfeigned Hatred* of the whole Body of *Sin*; and especially of those secret, or beloved Sins, that did most powerfully captivate him before, 1 *Cor.* 6. 11. *Tit.* 3. 3, 5. *Col.* 3. 3, 5, 7, 8. But the *Opinionative Convert* is still *carnal* and *unmortified*, and inwardly at the Heart, the Interest of the *Flesh* is habitually predominant. He is not brought to an unreconcilable Hatred to the great Master-Sins that ruled him, and lay deepest; but only hath eased the top of his Stomach, and crept off

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some of the Branches of the Tree of *Death*. The Thorns of *worldly Desires*, and *Cares*, are still rooted in his *Heart*; and therefore no wonder if they choak the Seed of *wholesome Truth*, and there be a greater *Harvest* for the *Devil* than for *God*, *Gal.* 5. 24 & 6. 4, 8. *Rom.* 8. 5. *Mat.* 13. 22.

2. Another Sign that follows upon this, is, that the sound *Convert* doth carry on the Course of his *Obedience*, in a way of *Self-denial*, as living in a continual Conflict with his own Flesh, and expecting his *Comfort* and *Salvation* to come in upon the Conquest: And therefore he can *suffer* for *Christ*, as well as be found in cheaper Obedience, and he dare not ordinarily refuse the most costly Service. For the Spoils of his *fleshly Desires* are his Prey, and Crown of glorying in the Lord, *Luke* 14. 27, 33. *Gal.* 5. 17, 24. 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. *Luke* 9. 23, 24. 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. *Gal.* 6. 14.

But the *Opinionative Convert* still liveth to his *Carnal Self*; and therefore secretly at least, seeks himself, and layeth hold on present things, as the *true Convert* layeth hold on *Eternal Life*. The *Truths of God* being received but into his *Opinion*, do not go deep enough to conquer Self, and to take down his great Idol, nor make him go through Fire and Water, and to serve *God* with the best, and honour him with his *Substance*, much less with his *Sufferings* and *Death*: He hath something that he cannot spare for God, *Mat.* 13. 21. *Luke* 18. 22, 23, 24.

3. The *sound Convert* hath taken *God* for his *Portion*, and *Heaven* for that sure and *full Felicity*, which he is resolved to venture upon; that's it that he hath set his Heart, and Hopes upon, and thither tends the Drift of his Life, *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Matth.* 6. 20, 21.

But he that is changed only in his *Opinions*, had never such sure Apprehensions of the Life to come; nor so full a Confidence in the *Promises of God*, as to set his *Heart* unfeignedly upon *God*, and make him truly

truly *Heavenly-minded*. He may have a *Heavenly Tongue*, but he hath an *Earthly Heart*. A bare *Opinion*, be it never so true, will not raise Mens Hearts so high, as to make their *Affections*, and the very Design, and Business of their Lives to be Heavenly, *Phil.* 3. 18, 19, 20. *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. *Rom.* 8. 5.

4. The *found Convert* hath seen the vileness of himself, in the sinfulness of his *Heart* and *Life*, and the misery thereby deserved; and so is a sincerely humbled self-accusing Man.

But the *Opinionist* is commonly unhumbled, and well conceited of himself, and a *Self-justifying Pharisee*; unless it be that *Self-accusing* will cost him no Disgrace, and he take it up as a *Custom*, or that which may bring him into the Repute of being humbled and sincere. For his *Opinion* will not search and pierce his Heart, nor batter down his self-exalting Thoughts, nor root up the Master-sin of Pride. These are too great Works for an *Opinion* to perform. And therefore you shall hear him more in the *excusing* of his *Sin*, *the magnifying* of himself, or the stiff maintaining of his own *Conceits*, than in *unfeigned self-abasing*, Rom. 12. 16. 1 Cor. 1. 19, 20. & 3. 18. 2 Cor. 10. 12. Luk. 16. 15.

5. The *found Convert* is so acquainted with the *defects*, and *sins*, and *necessities* of his own *Soul*, that he is much taken up at home, in his Studies, and Cares, and Censures, and his daily Work: The acting and strengthning of *Grace*, the subduing of *Corruption*, and his *daily walking with God*, are much of his *Employment*: Above all keeping, he keeps his Heart, as knowing that from thence are the Issues of Life. He cannot have while to spy out the Faults of others, and meddle with their Affairs, where Duty binds him not, as others can do; because he hath so much to do at home, *Gal.* 6. 3, 4. *Prov.* 4. 23.

But the *Opinionist* is most employed abroad, and about meer *Notions* and *Opinions*; but he is little employed in such *Heart searching*, or *Heart-observing Work*. His Light doth not pierce so deep, as to shew him his *Heart*, and the Work that is there to be necessarily done. As the change is little upon his *Heart*, so his employment is little there. He is little in bewailing his *secret Defects* and *Corruptions*, and little in keeping his *Soul's Accounts*, and little in *secret Striving* with his *Heart*, to work it into Communion with *God*, and into a spiritual lively fruitful Frame. He is forward to aggravate the Sins of others, and oft-times severe enough in censuring them: But he is a very gentle Censurer of himself, and a patient Man with his own *Corruptions*, and puts the best Construction upon all that is his own own. He hath much labour perhaps in shaping his *Opinions*, but little for the humbling and sanctifying his Heart, by the power of the Truth.

6. And as the difference lieth thus constantly in the *Heart*, so it is usually manifested by the Tongue, *Mat.* 12. 34. The *sound Convert* is most desirous to discourse of those great and saving Truths, which his very Heart hath taken in, and which he hath found to be the *Seed of God* for his *Regeneration*, and the Instruments of that *holy* and *happy change* that is made upon him: He feeleth most savour, and life, in these great, and most *necessary Points*, which formed the *Image of God* upon him; and upon these he daily feeds and lives. Read *John* 17. 3. 1 *Cor.* 15. 1, 2, 3. 4, 5, 6. 1 *Cor.* 2. 2. *Phil.* 3. 8, 9, 10, 11. 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. *Acts* 26. 22, 23. In these Scriptures you may find what Points they were that the greatest *Saints* did study, and live upon.

But the *Opinionist* is most forward to discourse of meer *Opinions*, and to feed upon the Air of Notions, and Controversies of lesser moment. For one hours *holy, heavenly, experimental, heart-searching Discourse*, that you shall have from him, you shall have many, and

and many hours discourse of his *Opinions*. I mean it indifferently of all his *Opinions*, whether true or false. For tho' Falshoods cannot be fit Food for the Soul, yet Truths themselves also may be made of little Service to them. A Man may be a meer *Opinionist*, that hath *true Opinions*, as well as he that hath *false*. Almost all the free and zealous Discourse of these Men, on Matters of Religion, is about their several Sides, and Parties, and Opinions: If they be set upon a Point, especially wherein they seem to themselves to be wiser than others, they have a Fire of Zeal for it in their Breasts, that makes them desirous to be propagating it to others. About the *Orders*, and *Ceremonies of the Church*; about the *Forms of Prayer*, and the *Accidents of Worship*; about *Infant-Baptism*, or other such *Controversies in Religion*, is the freest of their Discourse.

Yea, you may perceive much of the difference, even in the very manner of their Conference. A serious Christian, even when he is necessitated to speak of lower controverted Points, yet doth it in a spiritual manner, as one that more savoureth higher Truths, and makes a holy and heavenly Life his End, even in these lower Matters; and deals about such Controversies in a practical manner, and in order to the growth of Holiness.

But the *Opinionists*, even when they speak of the most *weighty Truths*, do speak of them but as *Opinions*; and when they discourse of *God*, of *Christ*, of *Grace*, of *Heaven*, it is but as they discourse of a Point in *Philosophy*, or little better. They go not through the Shell to the Kernel, they look after the *Truth*, but they have but little relish of the *Goodness*.

The like may be said of their reading, and hearing of Sermons. The sound Convert feeleth Life and Spirits, in that which is little savoury to the *Opinionist*. It is one thing in a Sermon, or Text, that is pleasant to a true Christian, and a other thing usually

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that is most pleasant to the *Opinionist*. The true Christian delighteth in, and feedeth on the inward Life of Spiritual Doctrine, and the good which they offer him; that is, indeed, it is upon God, and Christ himself, that he is feasting his Soul, in reading and hearing. For this is the Soul of all, without which Letters and Words are but a Carcass. But the superficial *Opinionist* is much more taken up, either with the History, or the Elegancy of Speech, or with the rational Light of the Discourse, still sticking in the Bark, and savouring not Christ, and the Father in all. As a Man that reads the Deeds, or Lease of his own Lands, delights in one thing; and a Clerk that reads the same, or the like, in a Book of Precedents, for his Learning, delights in another thing. So is it in this Case.

7. And hence it follows, that they are several sorts of Duties, and Exercises usually, that these several sorts of Persons are most addicted to. The sound Convert is most addicted to those spiritual Means, that tend most to the strengthning of his *Faith*, and warming his Heart with the *Love of God*, and promoting *Holiness*, and destroying *Sin*. But the *Opinionist* delighteth most in those Means that tend to furnish him with *Speculative Knowledge*, and *Discourse*, and to satisfie his Fancy, or curious Mind. The sound Convert is much addicted to *Prayer*, even in secret, and to *heavenly Meditations*, and *gracious Discourse*. But the *Opinionist* is much more addicted to reading *Histories*, or *Controversies*, or *Dogmatical Divinity*, or *Civil* and *Political Matters*. The sound Convert savoureth best those Preachers, and Books, that speak the most *weighty spiritual Truths*, in the most *weighty spiritual Manner*, in *Power*, and *Demonstration* of the *Spirit*: But the *Opinionist* relisheth those Preachers, and Books most, that either speak curiously to please the Ear, or exactly, and learnedly to please the Natural Intellect, or that speak for the Opinions, or Party that he is addicted to: But others he hath less mind of.

8. More-

8. Moreover, the sound Christian layeth out most of his *Zeal*, *Affections*, and *Endeavours*, about the great *Essentials of Religion*, and that as I said in a practical manner. But the *Opinionist* layeth out his Zeal upon *Opinions*; right or wrong, it is but as *Opinions*: Of these he makes his Religion; for these he contendeth, he loveth those best that are of his own *Opinion*, tho' there be nothing of the special *Image of God* upon his *Soul*; or if he love a true Christian, it is not so much for his Holiness and Spirituality, as because he is of his mind in those Matters of *Opinion*. Hence it is, that he is usually a bitter Censurer of those that are not of his *Opinion*, how upright soever they may be; his very esteem of Men, and love to them is partial, and factious to those that are of his Mind and Sect. A *Papist* will esteem, and love Men of the *Popish Sect*, and an *Anabaptist* will esteem, and love Men of that *Sect* most; yea, a *Protestant*, if he be an *Opinionist*, doth esteem of Men, and love them as a *Sect*: Whereas the true *Christian*, as he is truly *Catholick*, and of the *Catholick Church*, which is not confined to *Papists*, no nor *Protestants*, so he hath truly *Catholick Affections*, and loveth a *Christian* as a *Christian*, a *Godly Man* as *Godly*; yea, if he saw more *serious Godliness* in one that is not of his *Opinion* in lesser things, yet would he love him more than one that is in such Matters of his *Opinion*, that is *ungodly*, or of more doubtful *Piety*. For as it is *God* in *Christ* that he principally loveth, so it is *Christ* that he admireth in his Members; and so much of *Christ* as he sees in any, so much are his special Affections towards them.

9. Ordinarily the meer *Opinionist* will sacrifice the very Ends of the Gospel, and the Honour and Success of the great Fundamental *Truths of God*, to the Interest of those *Opinions*, which he hath in a singular manner made his own. He will rather hinder the Propagation of the *Common Truths*, and the *Conversion of the Ignorant*, then he will silence his *Opinions*, or suffer

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them to lose any advantages with the World. Hence it is that we cannot prevail with the *Papists*, to silence a while the Differences between us and them, till we have taught their Ignorant (in *Ireland*, and other barbarous parts) the knowledge of those *Truths* that all are agreed in. Nor can we get many *Anabaptists*, or any such *Sect*, that is engaged in a Division to forbear their *Opinions*, till we have endeavoured to lay the *necessary Grounds*, on which all must build, that will be saved. But tho' it be apparent to the World, that their Disputes and Contentions do exceedingly harden the Ignorant, and Ungodly against all *Religion*, and hinder their *Conversion*, and *Salvation*, yet will they go on in the unseasonable, intemperate bruiting of their Conceits, and will not be perswaded to agree on those Terms, for the managing of Differences, as most tend to secure the Interest of *Christ*, and his *Gospel* in the main. If an *Opinionist* be for the *Truth*, he is usually without much Zeal for it, because that Nature doth not befriend the great *Spiritual Truths* of the *Gospel*, so much as it doth *Errors*, and private Conceits. But if he be of *Erroneous Opinions*, he is usually very zealous for them: For *corrupted Nature*, and *Self*, and *Satan*, (and the *World* oft-times) do more befriend these, and furnish him with a Zeal for them, and blow the Coal. The counterfeit *Angel of Light*, is very ordinarily also a Spirit of Heat, and great Activity; not a reviving Fire, nor a refining Fire, but a consuming Fire, devouring *Christian Love*, and *Meekness*, and *Patience*, and therewith the *Church*, and *Truth of God*, so far as it can prevail. For lesser Matters, that minister Questions, such Men can lay by that which tends to *Godly Edifying in Faith*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 4. Yea, that *Charity*, which is the very End of the *Commandment*, out of a *pure Heart*, *a good Conscience*, and *Faith unfeigned*, verse 5. *From these they swerve, and turn aside to vain jangling*; *oft-times desiring to be Teachers of such things, in which they understand not what they say, nor whereof they*

speak,

speak, verſ. 6, 7. *Conſenting not to the wholſome Words of Chriſt, and the Doctrine which is according to Godlineſs, they teach otherwiſe, being proud, knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions, and ſtrife of words, whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, railings, evil ſurmiſings, perverſe diſputing of men of corrupt minds, and deſtitute of the Truth*, 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5. Yea they ſometimes take their *Opinions*, or their worldly gain that they often aim at, to be inſtead of *Godlineſs*: And think, that to be Godly, is to be of their mind and way. They *uſe to ſtrive about words to no profit, but to the ſubverting of the hearers, and their vain babling increaſe to more ungodlineſs*, 2 Tim. 2. 14, 16.

But the *True Convert* looks principally to the main. He loves every known *Truth of God*; but in their Order, and accordingly to their worth and weight: He will not for his own *Opinions*, wilfully do that which will hazard the main, or hinder the *Goſpel*, and the ſaving of *mens ſouls*. Though he will not be falſe to any *Truth*, yet he will avoid *fooliſh and unlearned queſtions, knowing that they do gender ſtrife; and the Servant of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle to all men, and meekly inſtruct oppoſers; following Righteouſneſs, Faith, Charity, Peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*, 2 Tim. 2. 22, 23, 24, 25.

10. Laſtly *True Converts* are ſtedfaſt, but *Opinionifts* are uſually mutable, and unconſtant. The *ſound Convert* receiveth the greateſt *Truths*, and receives the *Goodneſs* as well as the *Truth*; and takes it not only into the *Head*, but into the *Heart*, and giveth it deep rooting: He cloſeth with *God* as his only felicity, and with *Chriſt* as his only *Refuge*, and *Redeemer*, and with *Heaven* as the ſure *everlaſting Glory*, to which the world is but a mole hill, or a dungeon. No wonder then if this man be *ſtedfaſt, and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, that knows, his Labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15. 58.

But the *Opinioniſt*, either faſteneth on ſmaller matters, or elſe holdeth theſe great matters but as bare *Opinions*,

pinions, and therefore they have no such interest in his *heart*, as to stablish him against shaking tryals, and temptation: For two sorts there are of these *Opinionists*, the one sort have no Zeal for their own *Opinions*; because they are but *Opinions*: And these are Time-servers: and will change, as the King, or their Land lords change, and fit their *Opinions* to their worldly *Ends*. The other sort have a *burning Zeal* for their *Opinions*; and these use to wander from one *Opinion* to another, not able to resist the subtilty of seducers; but are taken with fair and plausable *reasonings*; not able to see into the heart of the cause. These are Children fled to and fro, and carried about with every *wind of Doctrine*, by the slight, and cunning craftiness of men, whereby they lie in weight to deceive, *Eph.* 4.14. When with great confidence they have held one sort of *Opinion* a while, and railed against those that were not of their mind, ere long they will themselves forsake them, and take up another way, and be as confident in that, and take no warning by the experience of their former deceit. And thus they go oft from one *Opinion* to another, till at last finding themselves deceived so oft some of them cast off all Religion, and think there is no certainty to be found in any: Suspecting *Religion*, when they should have suspected their *false hearts*: And all this comes to pass, because they never received the Truth in the love of it, that they might be *Sanctified*, and *Saved* by it, 2 *Thes.* 2. 10, 11, 12. Nor ever gave it deep entertainment in their hearts, that it might throughly *convert them*; but took it as a bare *Opinion* into the brain to polish their tongues, and outsides, and deceive themselves as much as others.

And thus I have shewed you the difference between a *found Convert*, and an *Opinionist*, or one that hath but an overly *superficial Change*, that you may see which of these is your own condition.

To return now to my advice, and *Exhortation*, I intreat every person that readeth, or heareth these words, to see that they stick not in an *Opinionative Conversion*. To which End I further desire you, 1. To consider that it is a higher matter, that Christ came into the world for, then to change mens bare *Opinions*, and it is an higher matter that the *Gospel* is intended for, and that *Ministers* are sent to you. For it is more then a corruption of mens *Opinions*, that sin hath brought upon you; and therefore it is a deeper disease that must be cured. The work of *Christ* by his *Gospel* is, no less, then to fetch you off all that which flesh and bloud accounts your Happiness, and to unite you to himself, and make you *Holy*, as *God* is *Holy*, and to give you a new Nature, and make you as the dwellers or *Citizens of Heaven*, while you walk on *Earth*, *Phil.* 3.20,21. And these are greater matters then the changing of a *Party*, or *Opinion*. The *Holy Ghost* himself must dwell in you, and work in you, and imploy your *Soul*, and *life* for *God*, that you may study him, and love him, and live to him here, and live with him for ever. Do but think well of the *Ends*, and *meaning* of the *Gospel*, and how much greater matters it drives at, and then you will see that there's no taking up with an *Opinionative Religiousness*.

2. Keep company, if it be possible with the most *Sober*, *Spiritual*, and *Heavenly Professors*, that will be drawing you to the observations of your own heart and life, and opening to you the riches of the *Love of Christ*, and winning up your *affections to God*, and *Heaven*: And be not the companions of unexperienced wranglers that have no other *Religion*, but a Zeal for their Opinions, and will endeavour rather to make you like *Satan*, then like *God*, by possessing your minds with malice, and bitter thoughts of your brethren, and employing your tongues in reproaches, and vain striving, and making you

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on fire-brands in the places where you live: Neither be companions of them that hold the *Truth* no deeper then Opinion. For though some such may be useful to you in their places, yet if you have not more edifying familiars, your danger will be very great, lest you should let go the life of Religion, and take up with meer notions, and formalities as they

3. When you have considered, that every *Truth of God* is a *Message* to your *Hearts*, as well as to your Heads, and hath a work of *God* to do upon them, look after that work; and when you have heard, or read a Truth, go down into your *Heart*, and see what it hath done there: And if you find not in your *Will*, and *Resolutions*, and *Affections*, the Image, and fruits of the *Truth* you have heard, fetch it up again, and ruminate upon it, and do not think you have received it, or done with it, till this be done: yea take it but as lost, and sinfully rejected, if it have not done you some good at the very Heart.

4. Also be sure that you Practise all *practical Truth*, upon the first opportunity, as soon as you have heard them. Imprison them not in unrighteousness. Cast them not out in *forgetfulness*; use not a Lecture of *Divinity* as if it were a lesson of Musick, or a meer Philosophical, or Historical discourse. Read not the *Doctrine* of *Salvation* and the *Promises of Heaven*, and the forewarnings of *everlasting misery*, as you read a common story, or a groundless conjecture in an Almanack: But as a message from God, which tells you where you must dwell for ever, and as a *Direction* sent from *Heaven* to teach you the way thither. Fall to work then, and practise what you know, if you would be *Christians indeed*. *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* For the Opinionative hearer seeth but a slight appearance of the *Truth*, as a man that *looks* on his face in a glass, which he quickly *forgets*: But he that is a *sound believer*, and *practiser*, and not only an

Opinionative forgetful Hearer, is the Man that shall be blessed in *his* deed, *James* 1. 22, 23, 24, 25. *Opinion* without *Practice*, is building on the *Sand*, but *hearing*, and *sound believing*, and doing, is building upon the *Rock*, where the Building will stand after all Assaults, *Mat.* 7. 26, 27, 28. An *Opinionist* doth but seem to be *Religious*, while he keeps his reigning Sins, and therefore his *Religion* is in vain: But the *Practical Religion*, is the pure and undefiled *Religion*, *James* 1. 26, 27. Hearty Obedience will not only shew that your *Religion* is deeper than meer *Opinion*, but it will also advance it to a greater purity, and root it more deeply than it was before: A Man that hath studied the Art of *Navigation* in his *Closet*, may talk of it almost as well as he that hath been at Sea; but when he comes to practise it, he will find that he is far to seek. But let this Man go to Sea, and joyn Practice and Experience to his Theory, and then he may have a knowledge of the right kind. So if a Man that hath only read over *Military Books*, would be a true *Soldier*; or a Man that hath only studied *Physick*, would be a true *Physician*, what better way is there, than to fall to Practice? And so must you, if you would have a *Religion* that shall save your *Souls*; and not only a *Religion* that will furnish you with good Opinions and Expressions.

5. Moreover, if you would get above *Opinion*, be still searching more and more after the *Evidences* of the ancient *Fundamental Truths* that you have received; and lay open your Hearts to the power of them. Think it not enough that you take the *Christian Religion* for true, but labour after a *clearer sight* of its truth. For you may possibly upon some Conjecture take it for a *Truth*, by bare *Opinion*, when as the sight of fuller Evidences, and a full sight of those Evidences, might raise you from *Opinion*, to a working saving Faith.

6. Lastly,

5. Lastly, Take heed lest any thing be suffered to keep possession of your Hearts, and so to confine the Truth to your Brain. When the World is kept up in life and power, and is nearest the Heart, there is no room for the Word there, but it must float upon the top, and swim in your *Opinion*, because it can go no deeper, your *Lusts* and *Profits* having possession before it. The Word can never go to the Heart with unmortified Men, but by casting your Idols out of your Hearts; nor will it take rooting in you, but by rooting out the World.

O Sirs, if you knew the Misery of a meer *Opinionist*, you would sure be perswaded now to practice these *Directions*, that may raise you higher. An *Opinionist* is a *Deceiver* of himself, and oft of others; a Troubler of the *Church*, if he have any Zeal for *Opinions*, and hit (as usually he doth) on the wrong: And when his *Religion* is right, he is wrong himself, being out of the way, even when he is in the right way, because he is not right in that way: For he doth but sit down in it, when he should travel it. A Runner shall not win the Prize, by being in the right way only, unless he make haste. The knowledge of the *Opinionist* doth but serve to aggravate his Sin, and cause him to be beaten with many Stripes; but is not of force to sanctifie his Heart and Life, and to save him, *Jam.* 2. fully shews. Stick not therefore in an *Opinionative Righteousness*.

Direct. IX. My next Direction that your *Conversion* may prove *sound* in this, *Acquaint your Souls by Faith, with the Glory of the everlasting Kingdom, and see that you make it your Portion, and your End, and from thence let the rest of your Endeavours be animated.*

No Man can be a *found Christian*, that knoweth not the *Ends* and *Portion* of a *Christian*. There is a great deal of difference between the Desires of *Heaven* in a *sanctified Man*, and an *unsanctified*. The *Believer* prizeth it above Earth, and had rather be with *God* than

here (tho' Death that ſtands in the way, may poſſibly have harder Thoughts from him). But to the *Ungodly* there is nothing ſeemeth more deſirable than this World; and therefore he only chooſeth *Heaven* before *Hell*, but not before Earth; and therefore ſhall not have it upon ſuch a choice. We hear of Gold and Silver Mines in the *Indies*: If you offer a Golden Mountain there, to an *Engliſh-man* that hath an Eſtate and Family here, that are dear to him; perhaps he'll ſay, *I am uncertain whether their Golden Mountains be not meer Fictions to deceive Men; and if it be true that there are ſuch things, yet it is a great way thither, and the Seas are perilous; and I am well enough already where I am, and therefore let who will go thither for me, I will ſtay at home as long as I can.* But if this Man muſt needs be baniſhed out of *England*, and had his choice, whether he would go to the Golden Iſlands, or to dig in a Cole pit, or live in a Wilderneſs, he would rather chooſe the better than the worſe. So is it with an ungodly Man's Deſires, in reſpect to this World, and that to come. If he could ſtay here, in fleſhly Pleaſure, for ever, he would; becauſe he looks at *Heaven* as uncertain, and a great way off, and the Paſſage ſeemeth to him more troubleſome and dangerous than it is; and he is where he would be already: But when he ſees that there is no ſtaying here for ever, but *Death* will have him away, he had rather go to *Heaven* than to *Hell*; and therefore will be *Religious*, as far as the *Fleſh* and the *World* will give him leave, leſt he ſhould be caſt into *Hell*, when he is taken from the *Earth*.

But take an *Engliſh-man* that is in Poverty and Reproach, and hath neither Houſe nor Land, nor Friend to comfort him, and let him have the offer of a Golden Iſland, and a Perſon of unqueſtionable Skilfulneſs and Fidelity, that will promiſe in ſhort time to bring him ſafe thither, if he believe this Perſon, and can put his truſt in him, doubtleſs he will be gone and follow him over Sea and Land; and tho' the paſ-

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sage may somewhat daunt him, yet the promised possession will carry him through all. So is it with the *true Christian*; he is dead to this World, and see nothing here in which he can be happy; he is burdened and wearied with *Sin* and *Suffering*; he is firmly perswaded of the *Truth* of the *Gospel*; and seeth by *Faith* the World that is to Flesh invisible, and believeth in *Jesus Christ*, who hath promised to convey him safely thither; and therefore he would away; and tho' he love not *Death*, the stormy passage, yet he will submit to it, having so sure a Pilot, because he loves the Life which through Death he must pass into, and had rather be there than here.

Such as a Man's principal End is, such is the Man, and such is the Course of his Life. He that takes this World for his Portion, and makes the Felicity of it his End, is a carnal, worldly, unsanctified Man, whatever good and godly Actions may come in upon the by. It is he, and only he, that is a *sanctified Believer*, who looks on *Heaven* as his only *Portion*, and is sailing through the troublesome Seas of this World, of purpose to come to that desired Harbour; not loving these Seas better than the *Land of Rest*, which he is sailing to; but patiently and painfully passing thro' them, because there is no other way to *Glory*. As it is the Desire of the Land to which he is sailing, that moveth the Mariner or Passenger, to do all that he doth in his Voyage; and the Desire of his Home or Journey's end, that moveth the Traveller all the way; and the desire of seeing a perfect Building, that moveth the Builder in every Stroke of his Work; so it must be the *Love of God*, and the desire after *everlasting Blessedness*, that must be the very Engine to move the rest of the Affections and Endeavours of the *Saints*, and must make Men resolve on the necessary Labour and Patience of *Believers*. Take off this Weight, and all the Motions of *Christianity* will cease. No Man will be at Labour and Sufferings for nothing, if he can avoid them. It is a Life of Labour, tho' sweet

to the *Spirit*, yet tedious to the Flesh, which *Christianity* doth engage us in; and there is much Suffering to be undergone; and this to the very last, and to the denial of our selves; and if *God* require it, to the loss of all the Comforts of the World: For no less than *forsaking all* that we have, will serve to make us *Christ's Disciples*. And will any Man do this for he knows not what? Will any Man forsake all that he hath, unless it be for something better, which may be as sure to him as that he had, and may make him more happy? Look to it therefore, that you have right and *believing Thoughts* of *Heaven*, and that unfeignedly you take it for your *Home* and *Happiness*, and look not for any other Portion. *Till you see so much of the Certainty and Excellency of everlasting Glory, as shall prevail with you to lay out your faithful Labour for it, and to be at a Point with all this World, as having laid up your Treasure and Hopes in the World to come, you have no ground to conclude that you are true Christian Converts.*

Seeing therefore that it's *Heaven* that is the very *Reason*, the *End*, the *Life* of all our *Religion*, it follows that you must necessarily *understand* somewhat of its *Excellency*, and believe its *Certainty*, and accordingly *set your Hearts upon it*, and make the Attainment of it your daily Work and Business in the World: This is to be a Convert indeed.

Remember therefore first what I told you before, wherein the *Nature* of this *Blessedness* doth consist. I will only name the *Essentials* of it, that your Apprehensions may be right, and forbear to say much, as being done already.

1. The first thing considerable in our *everlasting Blessedness*, will be our *personal perfection of the whole Man*: This is in order to the Perfection of our *everlasting Operations* and *Enjoyments*. Our Bodies shall be no more Flesh and Blood, nor corruptible, or mortal, or subject to hunger, or pain, or weariness, nor to Passions that rebel against the *reasonable Soul*: But they

they shall be *spiritual Bodies*, and *immortal*, and *incorruptible*, and *undefiled*. Our *Souls* will be perfected in their *Natural Perfections*, and in their *Moral*. They shall be of more *advanced Understanding*, and *comprehensive Wisdom* than now: Our *Wills* shall attain to perfect Rectitude, in a perfect Conformity to the *Will of God*, and every Affection shall be brought to its perfect order and elevation: All Sin shall be done away, whether it were in the *Understanding*, *Will*, *Affections*, or the *Actions*. The Executive Power will be answerable to the rest of the Perfections, and to the blessed Work which it hath to do: And thus we shall be like the *Angels of God*.

2. The next thing considerable in our *Blessedness* is, our *Approximation, or Approach to God*: We shall be admitted into the *holiest*, and brought as near him as our Natures are capable of, and we are fit for.

3. Moreover, we shall be *Members of the New Jerusalem*, and receive our Glory in Communion with that *blessed Society*, and so as Members contribute to her Glory.

4. And we shall *behold the glorified Person of our Redeemer*, and he will be glorified on us as the Fruits of his Victory.

5. And we shall *behold the Face of the blessed God*, and see his Wisdom, and Power and Glory, and know as we are known. Tho' we cannot now fully know the manner, yet in that sence as our Angels are said to *behold the Face of God*, Mat. 18. 10. we also shall behold it.

6. We shall also *enjoy him in the nearest Relation, and by the most raised vigorous Affections of our Soul*: We shall be filled with his *Love* as full as we can hold, and we shall abound with perfect *Love to him* again: And the *Joy* that is in his Presence, with this Intuition and *Everlasting Love* will afford us, is such as no *Heart* is here able to conceive.

7. Being thus furnished, we shall be *employed in his perfect Praises*, in singing and rejoycing to him with the heavenly Host, and magnifying his great and holy Name.

8. And in *all this will the Glory of God shine forth*, and he will be admired in his Saints, 2 *Thes.* 1. 10, 11. In us it shall appear how abundant he is in power, and wisdom, and goodness, in holiness, faithfulness, and righteousness.

9. And *God himself will be well pleased with us, and with the New Jerusalem, and his glorified Son, and will take Complacency in this Manifestation and Communication of his Glory, and of Himself, unto his Creatures.* And this is his ultimate End, and should be the highest Point of ours. The Revolution hath now brought all to that Center, which is both the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end. His *Will* is the Fountain, or Efficient of all; and it is the *ultimate End* and *Perfection* of all.

There is no more to add, as to the *Matter*, but that as to the *Duration*, first we may take it as that which leaves no room for any Addition, that *all this will be everlasting*, leaving not any doubts or fears of a Cessation. Abundance of glorious Adjuncts of this Felicity might be mentioned; but I pass them all by, and do but name these few which are the Essential Constitutive Parts of our *Happiness*, because I have touched them before, and fuller spoken of them in the *Saint's Rest*. Thus much I thought meet to mention here, that you may have somewhat of that in your Eye that I am perswading you to intend and seek; and the rather, because I perceive that many of the Godly have not such distinct Apprehensions of the Constitutive Parts of this Felicity, as they should have; but much wrong their *Souls*, and *God* himself, and the *Glory* of their Profession, by looking but at some of the Parts.

Believe

Believe *God*, Sirs, that this is the Life that you shall live, if you will take it for your Portion, and set your Hearts upon it, and follow the *Conduct of Christ* for the obtaining it. Can you be content with *Heaven* alone? Is it enough for you, tho' you be despised and persecuted in the World? Do you account this for Certainty and Excellency to be worth all? Yea, that all is Dross and Dung to this. Thus must you do, if you will be true *Converts*. For all such are heavenly in their Minds and Hearts, and in the Drift of all their *Lives* and *Conversations*.

Direct. X. My next Advice that you may prove *sound Converts*, is this, [*Rest not, and count not your selves truly converted, till God and his holy Ways have your very Love, and Desire, and Delight: And take not that for a saving Change, when you had rather live a worldly ungodly Life, if it were not for the fear of punishment.*]

I shall speak but little of this, because I touch'd upon it before, when I told you that Christ must have your Hearts, and because it is but a Consectary of the last, or contained in it. But yet I think it best to present it here distinctly to your Consideration, because a slavish kind of Religiousness doth deceive so many; and because the Life of Grace is here expiest. I deny not but *holy Fear* is exceeding useful to us; even a fear of the *Threatnings* and *Judgments of God*. But yet I must tell you, that in *Fear* there is much more that is common to the Unsanctified, than there is in *Love*, *Desire*, *and Delight*. Tho' the *Fear of God be the beginning of Wisdom*, it is *Love* that is the *Perfection*: And that *Fear* is not filial, and of the right strain, if Love be not its Companion. *Fear* of Punishment shews that you love your *Natural Selves*; but it shews not that you *love* God, and are true hearted to him. The Devils fear and tremble, but they do not *love*. It is *Love* and not *Fear*, that is the Byass, the Inclination, and, as I may say, the *Nature*

of the Will of Man. By his Love it is, that you must know what the Man is. The Philosopher saith, [*Such as a Man is, such is his End*] which is all one as to say, [*Such as a Man is, such is his Love.*] You may fear a thing at the same time when you hate it: And it's too *common* to have some Hatred mixt with Fear. You may be as much against *God*, and his holy Ways, when *Fear* only drives you to some kind of Religiousness, as others are, that scarce meddle with *Religion* at all. The first thing that *God* looks at is, what you *would* do; and the next is, what you *do*. If you do it, but had rather leave it undone, you lose your Reward, and *God* will take it as if you had not done it: For it was not *you* that did it, if you did it not from *Love*; but it was *Fear* that dwelleth in you. *God* takes Mens hearty *Desires* and *Will*, instead of the *Deed*, where they have not power to fulfil it: But he never took the bare *Deed* instead of the *Will*. A blockish kind of Worship, consisting in outward Actions, without the *Heart*, is fit to be given to a *wooden God*, a *senseless Idol*; but the true and *living God* abhors it. He is a *Spirit*, and will be worshipped in *Spirit and in Truth*: Such Worshippers he seeketh, and such he will accept, *John* 4. 23, 24. A Beggar will be glad of your *Alms*, tho' you leave it with an ill will; because he *needeth* it; but *God* hath no *need* of you, nor of your Service, and therefore think not that he will accept you on such Terms. That People worshippeth *God* in vain, that draw near him with their Mouth, and honour him with their Lips, when their *Heart* is *far* from him, *Mat.* 15. 8, 9. A Man's Heart is where his *Love* is, rather than where his *Fear* is. If you should lie still upon your Knees, or in the *holy Assembly*; if you should be the strictest Observer of the *Ordinances* on the *Lord's Days*; and yet had such Hearts in you, as had rather let all these alone, if it were not for fear of Punishment; it will all be disregarded, and reckoned to you according to your *Wills*, as if it had never been done by you at all. It's *Love* that

that must win *Love*, or make you fit for *Love* to entertain. If you give your Goods to the Poor, or your Bodies to be burned, in a Cause that in it self is good, and yet have not Love, it availeth nothing, 1 *Cor.* 13. 1, 2, 3, 5. You will not think your Wife hath Conjugal Affections, that loveth another Man better than you, and had rather be gone from you, if she could live without you. It's an unnatural Son that loves not his Father, but had rather be from him, than with him. If God called you to a Bestial Drudgery or Slavery, he would then look but for your Work, and not care much whether you be willing or unwilling. If your Ox draw your Plough, and your Horse carry his Burden, you care not much whether it be willingly or unwillingly. Or if it be an Enemy that you have to deal with, you will look for no more than a forced Submission, or that he be disabled from doing you hurt. But this is not your Case: It is a State of Friendship that the *Gospel* calls you to; you must be nigh to God, his Children, and the Members of his Son; espoused to him in the dearest strongest Bonds: And do you think it is possible that this should be done without your *Wills* and *Affections?* If you can be content with the *Portion* of a *Slave*, and an *Enemy*, then do your *Task*, and deny *God* your *Affections*: But if you look for the Entertainment and Portion of a *Friend*, a *Child*, a *Spouse*; you must bring the *Heart* of a Friend, and of a Child, and of a Spouse. Fear may do good by driving you to the use of Means, and taking out of your Hands the things by which you would do your selves a mischief: It may *prepare* you for *saving Grace*; and when you are sanctified, it will prove a necessary Servant of Love, to keep you in awe, and save you from Temptations. But *Love* is the ruling Affection in the Sanctified; and *Fear* is therefore necessary, because of the present imperfection of *Love*, and because of the variety of Temptations that here beset us; think not therefore that you are savingly renewed, till *God* have

have your very Hearts. When you do but believe and tremble, it is better than to be unbelieving and ſtupid, and ſecure; but you are not *true Chriſtians* till you believe and love. We uſe to fly from that which we fear, and therefore do apprehend it to be evil to us. We avoid the Preſence and Company of thoſe that we are afraid of, but we draw nigh them that we love, and delight in their Company. We fear an Enemy; we love a Friend: We fear the Devil naturally; but we do not love him: It is *Love* that is that *Affection* of the *Soul*, that entertaineth *God* as *God*, even as good; tho' that Love muſt be accompanied with a filial fear, even a dread and reverence of his Majeſty and Greatneſs, and a fear of diſpleaſing him. If you ſhould toil out your ſelves in *Religious Duties*, with a Heart that had rather forbear them, if you durſt, you have not the Hearts of *God's Children* in your Breaſts. The *Magiſtrate* can *frighten* Men to the *Congregation*, and *outward Worſhip*: You may lock a Man in the *Church*, that had rather be away: And will any Man think that this makes him acceptable to *God?* You may keep a *Thief* from ſtealing by Priſon and Irons; but this makes him not accepted with *God* as a true Man: You may cure a Man of *Curſing* and *Swearing*, and *Railing*, and *idle and ribbald Talking*, even in a Minute of an Hour, by cutting off his Tongue: But will *God* accept him ever the more as long as he hath a Heart that would do it if he could? There's abundance of People at this Day, that are kept from abuſing the *Lord's Day*, and from *Swearing*, and *Stealing*, yea and from laying Hands on all about them that are *Godly*, and this by the Law of Man, and the fear of preſent Puniſhment: And do you think that theſe are therefore innocent or acceptable with *God?* By this account you may make the Devil a *Saint*, when he is chained up from doing miſchief: You may as well ſay, that a Lion is become a Lamb, when he is ſhut up in his Den: Or that a Maſtiff Dog is become harmleſs and gentle, when he

is

is muzled. Believe it, Sirs, you are never *Christians*, till you see that in *God* that wins your *Hearts* to him, so that you would not change your Master for any in the World; and till you see that in the hopes of *everlasting Glory*, that you would not change it for any thing else that can be imagined by the *Heart of Man*: And till you see that *Goodness* in a *heavenly Life*, that you had rather live it, than any Life in the World: You are not converted to *God* indeed, till you had rather live in *Holiness* than in *Sin*, if you had your freest choice; and till you would gladly be the strictest holiest Persons that you know in the World; and long after more and more of it, and fain would reach Perfection it self: For tho' we cannot be perfect here, yet no Man is *upright*, that *desireth* not to be *perfect*. For he that loveth *Holiness* as *Holiness*, must needs love the greatest Measure of *Holiness*, with the *greatest Love*. This is it that maketh *found Converts* to be so faithful and constant with *God*: A Man is forward and ready to a Work that he loves; when he draws back from it, as if it were a mischief, that hath no mind to do it. A Man is hardly kept from the Persons, and Places, and Employments that he loves; but a little will withdraw him from that which he loveth not. Why is it that we have so much ado to take off a Drunkard from his Companions, and his Lusts, but because he loves them better than Temperance, and gracious Company? And why can we so hardly draw the lustful Wretch from his *filthy Lusts*, or the *Glutton*, or the *idle sensual Person*, from his needless or *excessive Recreations*, but because they love them? And why is it that you cannot draw the *Worldling* from his *Covetousness*, but he parteth with his Money almost as hardly as with his *Blood*, but because he loveth it? And therefore what wonder if Temptations be resisted, and the fairest Baits of the World despised, by him that is truly in Love with God: No wonder if nothing can turn back that Man from the way to *Heaven*, that is in *Love* both with *Heaven*, and

with

with the Way. No wonder if that man ſtick cloſe to *Chriſt*, and never forſake a *holy life*, that taſteth the ſweetneſs of it, and feels it to do him good, and had rather go that way then any in the world. There is no true *Chriſtian* but can ſay with *David*, that *a day in Gods Courts is better then a thouſand, and he had rather be a door keeper in the Houſe of God, then to dwell in the tents* [yea, or the Pallaces] *of wickedneſs*. Do but mark thoſe profeſſors that prove *Apoſtates*, and forſake the way of godlineſs which they ſeemed to embrace, and ſee whether they be not ſuch as either took up ſome bare *Opinions* and outward Duties, upon a flaſh of ſuperficial illumination, or elſe ſuch as were frightned into a courſe of *Religion*, and ſo went on from duty to duty for fear of being *damned*, when all the while their hearts were more another way, and they had rather have been excuſed. Theſe hypocrites are they that are diſputing ſo oft the Obligations to their Duty, and asking, how do you prove that it is a *Duty* to pray in my *Family*, or a *Duty* to obſerve the Lords Day, or to come conſtantly to the *Congregation*, or to uſe the Communion of the godly in private meetings, or to repeat *Sermons*, or ſing *Pſalms*, and the like? Intimating that they are as birds in a Cage, or Hens in a Pen, that are boaring to get out, and had rather be at liberty: If it were not for the fear of the *Law of God* that is upon them, they had rather let all theſe *Duties* alone, or take them up but now and then at an idle time, when Satan and the fleſh will give them leave. If a Feaſt be prepared and ſpread before them, a good ſtomack will not ſtand to ask, How can you prove it my duty to eat? but perhaps the ſick that loath it, may do ſo. If the Cup be before the Drunkard, he doth not ſtand on thoſe terms [How do you prove it my duty now to drink this Cup, and the other Cup] No, if he might have but leave, he would drink on, without any queſtioning whether it be a duty; If the Gameſter, or the Whoremonger, might but be ſure that

that he should scape the punishment, he would never stick at the want of a Precept, and ask, Is it my duty? If there were but a gift of twenty pound a man, to be given to all the poor of the Town, yea and to all the people in general, I do not think I should meet with many people in the Town that would draw back and say, What Word of *God* commandeth me me to take? Or how can you prove that it is my duty? And why is all this? but because they have an inward Love to the thing; and Love will carry a man to that which seemeth good for him, without any command, or threatning. If these ungodly wretches had one spark of spiritual life within them, and any tast and feeling of the matters that concern their own *salvation*, instead of asking, How can you prove that I *must* pray with my Family, or that I *must* keep the *Lords day*, or that I *must* converse with the godly, and live a *holy life*! they would be readier to say, How can you prove that I *may not* pray with my Family? and that I may not sanctifie the *Lords Day*? and that I may not have communion with the *Saints in Holiness*. Seeing so great a mercy is offered to the world, why may not I partake of it as well others? I can perceive in many that I converse with, the great difference between a heart that *loves God* and *Holiness*, and a heart that seems *religious* and *honest* without such a Love; The *true Convert* perceiveth so much sweetness in *holy Duties*, and so much *spiritual advantage* by them to his *Soul*, that he is loth to be kept back; he cannot spare these Ordinances and *Mercies*, no more then he can spare the bread from his mouth, or the cloaths from his back; yea, or the skin from his flesh, no nor so much. He loveth them; he cannot live without them; at the worst that ever he is at, he had rather be holy then unholy, and live a godly then a *fleshly worldly life*. And therefore if he had but a bare leave from God, without a Command, to sanctifie the *Lords Day*, and to live in the holy Communion

munion of the *Saints*, he would joyfully take it with many thanks: For he need not be driven to his reft when he is weary, nor to his *fpiritual food* when he is hungry, nor to Chrift the refuge of his *foul*, when the curfe and accufer are purfuing him. But the unfanctified hypocrite, that never loved *God* or *Godlineſs* in his heart, he ſtands queſtioning and enquiring for ſome proof of a neceſſity of theſe courſes. And if he can but bring himſelf to hope that *God* will *ſave* him without ſo much ado (which by the help of the Devil he may eaſily be brought to hope,) away then goes the duty: If you could not ſhew him that there is a *Neceſſity* of *Family Prayer*, and a *Neceſſity* of *ſanctifying the Lords Day*, and a *Neceſſity* of forſaking his *tipling* and *voluptuoſneſs*, and a *Neceſſity* of living a *heavenly life*, he would quickly reſolve of another courſe: For he had *rather* do otherwiſe, if he durſt. He never was Religious from a true Predominant *Love to God* and a *holy life*, but for *fear* of *Hell*, and for other inferiour reſpects.

Remember this when you have precious opportunities before you, of doing or *receiving good*, and when you ſee that you have leave to take theſe opportunities, and yet you draw back, and are queſtioning, how we can prove it to be your duty, or that you cannot be ſaved without it; Do not theſe Queſtions plainly ſhew that you Love not the work, and Delight not in a holy life, and that you had rather let it alone? Are you not blind if you ſee not this is in your ſelves? Yea, its plain, that you have ſuch an averſneſs or hatred to *God* and a *holy courſe of life*, that if you did but know what ſhift to make to ſcape *damnation*, you would fly away from *God* and *Holineſs*, and have as little to do with them as you can. Your Queſtions and Cavils do plainly declare this wicked enmity and backwardneſs of your *hearts*: and conſequently ſhew how far you are from *true Converſion*.

Not that I am of their mind, that think there is ny Good which the Law of Chriſt Obligeth us not o accept, and which we can refuſe without *ſin*, and *danger* to our ſelves: For *God* doth both draw us, nd drive us at once. But when the Threatning nd Puniſhment only can prevail with men, and men ove not *God* and *Godlineſs* for themſelves, but had ather have liberty to live as the ungodly, I ſhall never take one of theſe for a ſanctified man, nor have any hope of the ſaving of ſuch a *ſoul*, how ar ſoever his fears may carry him from his outward ſins, or to outward duties: Till *God* ſhall give him a better *Converſion* then this, I ſay, I have not the ſmalleſt hope of this mans *ſalvation*. Then you are *Gods Children*, when the Honour, the Work, the Family, the Name of your Father are lovely nd delightful to you: And when you grieve that here is any remnants of ſin in your ſouls; and when your ſins are to you as lameneſs to the lame, that pain them every ſtep they go; and as ſickneſs o the ſick, that makes them groan, and groan again, nd long to be rid of it: And when you think thoſe the happieſt men on earth, that are the moſt holy, and wiſh from your hearts that you were ſuch as they, though you had not a houſe to put your head in: When you look toward God with longing thoughts, and are grieved that your underſtandings can reach no nearer him, and know no more of him, and that your hearts cannot embrace him with a more burning Love: When you admire the beauty of a meek, a patient, a mortified, ſpiritual heavenly mind, and long to have more of this your ſelf, yea to be perfect in all Holineſs and Obedience: When your hearts are thus brought over to God, that you had rather have him then any other, and *rather* live in his family then any where and walk in his ways then in any, then are you indeed *Converted*, never till then, whatever other diſpoſitions you may have.

And

And now if that were my business, what abundance of reason might I shew you, to make you willing to come over unto *God*, with *Love*, and with *Delight*. Whom else can you Love, if he that is *Love* it self seem not lovely to you? All loveliness is in *him* and from *him*: The creature hath none of it self, nor for it self: To Love a life of *sin*, is to Love the Image and Service of the *Devil*, and to Love that which feeds the flames of *Hell*. What is it then to Love this sin so well, as for the Love of it to fly from *God* and *Godliness*? Methinks men at the worst should Love that which will do them good, and not prefer that before it which will hurt them. Do sinners indeed believe that *God* and *Holiness* will do them hurt, and that sin will do them greater good? Is there ever a man so mad that he dare speak this and stand to it? If indeed you think it best to live in *sin*, and therefore had rather keep it then leave it, your understandings are befooled, I had almost used *Paul*'s Phrase, and said, *bewitched*, Gal. 3. 1. Will it do you any hurt to leave your beastly sensual lives, and to live *soberly, righteously, and godly in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, , and looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ*? This is the Doctrine of *Saving Grace*, *Tit.* 2. 11, 12, 13. Would it do you any harm to be assured of *Salvation*, and ready to die, and to know that the Angels shall Conduct your departing souls to Christ, and that you shall live in Joy with him for ever? Or to be employed in those holy works that must prepare you for this day, and help you to this assurance? If *God* be naught for you, if *Holiness*, and *Righteousness*, and *temperance* be naught for you, then you may as well say, *Heaven* is naught for you; and therefore you must resolve for sin and *Hell*, and see whether that be good for you. I shall say no more of this Point, because I have written of it already, in the Conclusion of the *Saints Rest*, which I desire you to peruse.

Direct.

Direct. XI. The next part of my Advice is, *If you would not have this Saving Work miscarry, Turn then this present day and hour, without any more delay.*

Somewhat I have spoke of this already, and therefore shall say the less. But yet I shall back this Direction with such *Reasons* as will certainly convince you, if you be not unreasonable, of the Folly of *Delay*, and shew you that it concerneth you presently to *return*. And tho' my Reasons will be numerous, it is not the *Number*, but the *Strength* of them, that I shall urge you principally to consider; and because of the *Number*, I will go over them with the greater brevity.

1. *Consider to whom it is that you are commanded to turn:* And then tell me, whether there can be any reason for delay. It is not to an empty deceitful creature, but to the faithful *All-sufficient God:* To him that is the Cause of all Things; the Strength of the Creation; the Joy of Angels; the Felicity of the Saints; the Sun and Shield of all the Righteous, and Refuge of the Distressed, and the Glory of the whole World. Of such Power, that his Word can take down the Sun from the Firmament, and turn the Earth, and all things into nothing; for he hath done more in giving them their being and continuance. Of such Wisdom, that was never guilty of mistake, and therefore will not mislead you, nor draw you to any thing that is not for the best. Of such Goodness, that Evil cannot stand in his sight; and nothing but your Evil could make him displeased with you; and it is from nothing but Evil that he calleth you to turn. It is not a malicious Enemy, that would do you a mischief, but it is to a *gracious God*, that is Love itself: Not to an implacable Justice, but to a *reconciled Father*; not to revenging Indignation, but to the Embracement of those Arms, and the Mercy of that *compassionate Lord*, that is enough to melt the *hardest*

hardeſt Heart, when you find your ſelf as the poor returning Prodigal, *Luke* 25. 20. in his Boſome, when you deſerved to have been under his Feet. And will the great and *bleſſed God* invite thee to his *Favour*, and wilt thou delay and demur upon the Return? The greateſt of the Angels of Heaven are glad of his *Favour*, and value no *Happineſs* but the Light of his *Countenance*: *Heaven* and *Earth* are ſupported by him, and nothing can ſtand without him: How glad would thoſe very *Devils* be of his favour, that tempt thee to neglect his *Favour*: And wilt thou delay to turn to ſuch a *God*? Why Man, thou art every Minute at his Mercy; if thou turn not, he can throw thee into *Hell* when he will, more eaſily than I can throw this Book to the Ground: And yet doſt thou delay? There are all things imaginable in him to draw thee; there is nothing that is good for thee, but it is perfectly in him, where thou may'ſt have it certain and perpetuated. There is nothing in him to give the leaſt diſcouragement: Let all the Devils in Hell, and all the *Enemies of God on Earth*, ſay the worſt they can againſt his Majeſty, and they are not able to find the ſmalleſt Blemiſh in his *abſolute Holineſs*, and *Wiſdom*, and *Goodneſs*: And yet wilt thou delay to turn?

2. Conſider alſo, as to *whom*, *ſo to what it is that thou muſt turn*. Not to *Uncleanneſs*, but unto *Holineſs*; not to the *ſenſual Life of a Beaſt*, but to the *noble rational Life of a Man*, and the more *noble heavenly Life of a Believer*. Not to an *unprofitable worldly Toil*, but to the *gainfulleſt Employment* that ever the Sons of Men were acquainted with: Not to the deceitful Drudgery of Sin, but to that *Godlineſs which is profitable to all things, having the Promiſe of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. 4. 8. Sirs, Do you know what a *Life of Holineſs* is? You do not know it, if you turn away from it: I am ſure if you knew it, you would never fly from it, no nor endure to live without it. Why, a *Life of Holineſs* nothing

nothing but a *living unto God:* To be conversant with him, as the Wicked are with the World; and to be devoted to his Service, as Sensualists are to the Flesh. It is to live in the *Love of God*, and our *Redeemer*, and in the Foretasts of his *everlasting Glory*, and of his *Love*; and in the sweet Forethoughts of that *blessed Life* that shall never end; and in the honest self-denying Course that leadeth to that *Blessedness*. A Godly Life is nothing else but a sowing the *Seed of Heaven* on *Earth*, and a learning in the School of *Christ*, the Songs of Praise which we must use before the *Throne of God*; and by *suffering*, a learning how to Triumph and Reign with *Christ*. And is there any thing in this Life which you have cause to be afraid of? The Sins and Weaknesses of the Godly are contrary to *Godliness*; and therefore *Goaliness* is no more dishonoured by them, than Health and Life is dishonoured by your Sickneſses. As Health is never the worse to be liked, but the better, because of the painful Grievousness of Sickness; so Godliness is to be liked the better, because the very Failings of the Saints are so grievous. If a true Believer do but step out of the way of *God*, he is *wounded*, he is *out of joint*, he is as *undone*, till he come in again, tho' it was but in one particular. And can you endure to continue Strangers to it altogether so long? I know you may find Faults in the Godly, till they are perfect, but let the most malicious Enemy of *Christ* on Earth, find any Fault in Godliness if he can.

Can you delay to come into your Father's Family, into the Vineyard of the Lord, into the Kingdom of God on Earth; to be Fellow-Citizens of the Saints, and of the Houshold of God; to have the Pardon of all your *Sins*, and the sealed Promise of *everlasting Glory?* Why, Sirs, when you are called on to turn, you are called to the *Porch of Heaven*, into the beginning of *Salvation:* And will you delay to accept *everlasting Life?*

3. Con-

3. Consider also *from what you are called to turn*; and then judge whether there be any reason of delay. It is from the Devil your Enemy; from the Love of a deceitful World, from the Seducement of corrupted brutish Flesh, it is from Sin the greatest Evil: What is there in Sin, that you should delay to part with it? Is there any good in it? Or what hath it ever done for you, that you should love it? Did it ever do you good? Or did it ever do any Man good? It is the deadly Enemy of *Christ* and you, that caused his Death, and will cause yours, and is working for your Damnation, if converting and pardoning *Grace* prevent it not: And are you loth to leave it? It is the Cause of all the Miseries of the World, of all the Sorrow that ever did befal you, and the cause of the *Damnation* of them that perish: And do you delay to part with it?

4. Your *delaying shews that you love not God, and that you prefer your Sin before him, and that you would never part with it, if you might have your will.* For if you loved God, you would long to be restored to his Favour, and to be near him, and employed in his Service, and his Family. Love is quick and diligent, and will not draw back. And it is a sign also that you are in love with Sin; For else why should be so loth to leave it? He that would not leave his Sin and turn to God, till the next Week, or the next Month, or Year, would never turn if he might have his desire. For that which makes you desirous to stay a Day or Week longer, doth indeed make you loth to turn at all. And therefore it is but Hypocrisie to take on you, that you are willing to turn hereafter, if you be not willing to do it now, without delay.

5. Consider *but what a Case you are in, while you thus delay.* Do you think you stand on dry Ground, or in a safe Condition? If you knew where you are, you would sit as upon Thorns, as long as you are unconverted, you would be as a Man that

that stood up to the Knees in the Sea, and saw the Tide coming towards him; who certainly would think that there's no standing still in such a place. Read what I have said of the State of the Unconverted, in my first Treatise of *Conversion*. In a word, you are the Drudges of *Sin*, the Slaves of the *Devil*, the Enemies of *God*, the Abusers of his *Grace* and *Spirit*, the Despisers of *Christ*, the *Heirs of Hell*. And is this a State to stay in an Hour? You have all your Sin unpardoned; you are under the Curse of the Law, the Wrath of God is upon you, and the Fulness of it hangs over your Heads, Judgment is coming to pass upon you the dreadful Doom, the Lord is at hand, Death is at the Door, and waits but for the Word from the Mouth of God, that it may arrest you, and bring you to *everlasting Misery*: And is this a State for a Man to stay in?

6. Moreover, *Your delaying giveth great advantage to the Tempter.* If you would presently turn and forsake your Sins, and enter a faithful *Covenant* with *God*, the *Devil* would be almost out of hope, and the very heart of his Temptations would be broken: He would see that now it is too late; there's no getting you out of the *Arms of Christ*. But as long as you delay, you keep him still in heart and hope; he hath time to strengthen his Prison and Fetters, and to renew his Snares; and if one Temptation serve not, he hath time to try another, and another: As if you would stand as a Mark for Satan to shoot at, as long as he please. What likelihood is there, that ever so foolish a Sinner should be recovered and saved from his Sin?

7. Moreover, *Your delaying is a vile abuse of Christ, and the Holy Ghost, and may so far provoke him, as to leave you to your self, and then you are past help.* If you delight so to trample on your crucified Lord, and will so long put him to it by your refusing his Grace and grieving his Spirit; What can you expect, but that he should turn away in his Wrath, and utterly forsake

take you, and say, [*Let him keep his Sin, seeing he had rather have it than my Grace; let him continue ungodly, seeing he is so loth to be sanctified; let him take his own Course, and die in his Sin, and repent in Hell, seeing he would not repent on Earth.*] You provoke Christ thus to give you up.

8. Consider also I beseech you, *if you ever mean to turn, what it is that you stay for.* Do you think to bring down *Christ* and *Heaven* to lower Rates, and to be saved hereafter with less ado? Sure you cannot be so foolish: For *God* will be still the same, and *Christ* the same; and his Promise hath still the same Condition, which he will never change; and Godliness will be the same, and as much against your carnal Interest hereafter as it is now. When you have look'd about you never so long, you'll never find a fairer or nearer way; but this same way you must go or perish. If you cannot leave Sin now, how should you leave it then? It will be still as sweet to your Flesh as now: Or if one Sin grow stale by the decay of Nature, another that's worse will spring up in its stead, and tho' the Acts abate, they will all live still at the root; for Sin was never mortified by Age. So that if ever you will turn, you may best turn now.

9. Yea more than that; *The longer you stay, the harder it will be.* If it be hard to day, it is like to be harder to morrow. For as the *Spirit of Christ* is like to forsake you for your wilful Delays, so Custom will strengthen Sin; and Custom in Sinning will harden your Hearts, and make you as past feeling, to work all *uncleanness with greediness*, Eph. 4. 19. Can not you crush this Serpent when it is but in the Spawn; and can you encounter it in its Serpentine Strength? Cannot you pluck up a tender Plant, and can you pluck up an Oak or Cedar? O Sinners, what do you do, to make your *Recovery* so difficult by delay? You are never like to be fairer for *Heaven*, and to find *Conversion* an easier Work, than now you may

so. Will you stay till the Work be ten times harder, and yet do you think it so hard already?

10. Consider also, That *Sin gets daily Victories by your delay.* We lay our Batteries against it, and preach, and exhort, and pray against it, and it gets a kind of Victory over all, as long as we prevail not with you to turn. It conquereth our Perswasions and Advice; it conquereth all the Stirrings of your *Consciences*; it conquereth all your heartless *Purposes*, and deceitful *Promises*. And these frequent Conquests do *strengthen* your Sin, and weaken your Resistance, and leave *the matter* almost hopeless. Before a Physician hath used Remedies, he hath more hope of a Cure, than when he hath tried all means, and finds *that the best Medicines* do no good, but the Man is still as bad or worse. So when all means have been *tried with you.* and *yet you* remain *unconverted*, the Case draws towards *Desperation it self*; the very means are disabled more than before; that is, your Hearts are unapter to be wrought upon by *them:* When you have long been under *Sermons*, and *Reading*, and among good Examples, and *yet* you are *unconverted*, these Ordinances lose much of their force with you: Custom will make you *slight* them, and be *dead hearted* under them. And it is these very same *Means* and *Truths that you have frustrated, that* must do the work, or it never will be done: The same Plaister must heal you, *that* you have thrown off so *oft:* And what a sad Case is this, *that* there is no hope left, but in the very same Medicine which you have taken so oft in vain.

11. Moreover, *Age it self hath many Inconveniences, and Youth hath many great Advantages, and therefore it is folly to delay.* In Age the Understanding and Memory grows dull, and People grow uncapable, and almost unchangeable. We see by our every Day's Experience, *that* Men think they should not change when they are old; *that* Opinion or Practice *that* they have been brought up in, they think *that* they should not then forsake. To learn when they are old,

you see how much they are against it. Besides, how unfit is Age to be at *that* Pains, *that* Youth can undergo? How unfit to begin the *holy Warfare*, against *the Flesh, the World*, and *Devil?* God's way is to list his Soldiers as soon as may be, even in their Infancy, which they must own as soon as ever they come to Age: And the *Devil* would not have it done at all; and therefore he would have it put off as long as may be: In Infancy he will tell the Parents, with the *Anabaptists*, *It is too soon to be dedicated to God, and entred into his Covenant:* When they come to their Childhood, and youthful State, he will then perswade them, *that it is yet too soon*; and when he can no longer perswade them, *that it is yet too soon*, he will then perswade them, *that it is too late.* O what a happy thing is it to come unto God betimes, and with the first! What advantage hath Youth? They have the Vigour of Wit and of Body; they be not rooted and hardned in *Sin*, nor filled with prejudice and obstinacy against Godliness, as others be. Besides the Capacity of serving God, of which anon.

12. *You have such Times of Advantage and Encouragement, as few Ages of the World have ever seen, and few Nations on Earth do enjoy at this day.* What plain and plentiful *Teaching* have you? What abundance of good Examples, and the Society of the Godly? Private and publick Helps are common. *Godliness* is under as little Suffering as ever you can expect to see it; yea, it is grown into Reputation among us; so that it is an Honour to serve God, and a Dishonour to neglect it (as well it may). Our Rulers countenance the Practices of *Godliness*; they proclaim themselves the forward Professors and Patrons of it, and take this as their Glory. And this is not ordinary in the World. Seldom hath the *Church* seen such Days on Earth. And *yet* is not the Way to *Heaven* fair enough for you? *Yet* are you not ready to turn to God? When should Men make Hay, but when the Sun shines? Will you delay till this Harvest-time be over, and the Winte

Winter of Persecution come again? Can you better turn to God, when a Godly Life is the common Scorn of the Country, as it was a while ago? And when every one will be deriding and railing at you? Or when it may possibly cost you your Lives? Have you Sun, and Wind, and Tide, to serve you, and will you stay to set out in Storms, and Darkness?

13. Moreover, *Your delay doth cast your Conversion and Salvation upon hazard, yea upon many and grievous hazards.* And is your *everlasting Happiness* a *matter* to be wilfully hazarded, by causeless and unreasonable Delays? 1. If you delay to day, you are utterly uncertain of living till to morrow. If you put by this one motion, you know not whether ever you shall have another. Alas, that ever the Heart of Man should be so senseless, as to delay, when they know not but it may prove their *Damnation*, and when *Heaven* or *Hell* must certainly follow; that they dare put off a *Day* or *Hour*, when they know not whether ever they shall see another. 2. And as your Life is uncertain, so are the Means uncertain by which God useth to do the Work. He may remove your *Teachers*, and other Helps; and then you will be further off than before. 3. And if both should continue, yet *Grace* it self is uncertain. You know not whether ever the *Spirit of God* will put another *thought of turning* into your *Hearts*; or at least, whether he will give you *Hearts to turn.*

14. Moreover, *The delay of Conversion continueth your Sin, and so you will daily increase the number, and increase your guilt, and make your Souls more abundantly miserable.* Are you not deep enough in Debt to God already, and have you *not yet* Sins enough to answer for upon your Souls? Would you fain have one Year's Sins more, or one Day's Sins more to be charged upon you? O if you did but know what Sin is, it would amaze you to think, what a Mountain lieth already upon your Consciences. One Sin unpardoned

will sink the stoutest Sinner into Hell. And you have many a thousand upon your Souls already: And would you yet have more? Methinks you should rather look about you, and bethink you how you may get a Pardon for all that's past

15. And as *Sin increaseth daily by delay, so consequently the Wrath of God increaseth; you will run further into his displeasure:* And possibly you may cut down the Bough that you stand upon, and hasten even bodily destruction to your selves. When you live daily upon God, and are kept out of Hell, by a Miracle of his Mercy, methinks you should not desire yet longer to provoke him, lest he withdraw his Mercy, and let you fall into Misery.

16. And do but consider, *what will become of you, if you be found in these delays.* You are then lost Body and Soul for ever. Now if you had but *Hearts* to know what is good for you, the worst of you might be converted and saved; for God doth freely offer you his Grace. But if you die in your Delays, in the twink of an Eye, you will find your selves utterly undone for ever. Now there is hope of a Change; but when Delays have brought you to Hell, there is no more Change, no nor more Hope.

17. Consider, *that your very time which you lose by these Delays, is an inconceivable Loss.* When Time is gone, what would you then give for one of those Years, or Days, or Hours, which now you foolishly trifle away? O wretched Sinners, are there so many thousand Souls in Hell, that would give a World if they had it, for one of your Days; and yet can you afford to throw them away in Worldliness and Sensuality, and loitering Delays? I tell you, *Time is better worth, than all the Wealth and Honours of the World.* The Day is coming when you will set by time; when it is gone you will know what a Blessing you made light of. But then all the World cannot call back one Day or Hour of this precious Time, which you

can

an sacrifice now to the Service of your Flesh, and cast away an unprofitable sinning.

18. Consider also, *that God hath given you no time to spare.* He hath not lent you one day or hour, more than is needful for the work that you have to do, and therefore you have no reason to lose any by your delays. Do you imagine that *God* would give a Man an hours time for nothing; much less for to abuse him, and serve his Enemy. No, let me tell you, that if you make your best of every hour, if you should never lose a minute of your lives, you would find all little enough for the work you have to do. I know not how others think of time, but for my part I am forced daily to say, *How swift, how short is time? And how great is our work; and when we have done our best, how slowly goeth it on?* O precious time! What hearts have they, what lives do those Men lead, that think time long? that have time to spare, and pass in idleness.

19. To convince you more; consider I beseech *you, the exceeding greatness of the work you have to do*; and tell me then, whether it be time for you to delay? Especially you that are yet unconverted, and Strangers to the heavenly Nature of the Saints, you have far more to do than other Men. You have a multitude of head-strong *Passions* to subdue, and abundance of *deadly Sins* to kill, and *rooted Vices to root up:* You have many a *false Opinion of God*, and his ways, to be plucked up, and the Customs of many Years standing to be broken: You have blind Minds that must be enlightned with *heavenly Knowledge*, and abundance of *Spiritual Truths*, that are above the reach of *Flesh* and *Blood*, that you must needs learn and understand; you have much to know, that is hard to be known. You have a dead Soul to be made alive, and a *hard Heart* to be melted, and a *seared Conscience* to be softned, and made tender, and the guilt of many thousand Sins to be pardoned: You have a new Heart to get, and a new End to aim at, and seek after, and a

new Life to live; abundance of Enemies you have to fight with and overcome; abundance of *Temptations* to resist and conquer. Many *Graces* to get, and preserve, and exercise, and increase; and abundance of *Holy Works* to do for the *Service of God*, and the good of your selves, and others. O what a deal of work doth every one of these words contain! And yet what abundance more might I name! And have you all this to do, and yet will you delay? And they are not indifferent Matters that are before you: It is no less than the *saving of your Souls*, and the obtaining the *blessed Glory of the Saints*. Necessity is upon you, these are things that *must* be done, or else *woe* to you that ever you were born: And yet have you another day to lose! Why, Sirs, if you had a hundred Mile to go, in a day or two, upon pain of death, would you delay? O think of the work that you have to do, and then judge whether it be not time to stir?

2o. And methinks it should exceedingly terrifie you to consider, *what abundance by such delays do perish; and how few that wilfully delay, are ever converted and saved.* Many a Soul that once had purposes hereafter to repent, is now in the Misery, where there is no *Repentance* that will do them any good. For my part, tho' I have known some very few *converted* when they are old; yet I must needs say, both that they were very few indeed, and that I had reason to believe, that they were such that had sinned before in ignorance, and did not wilfully put off *Repentance*, when they were convinced, that they must turn. Tho' I doubt not but God may convert even these if he please, yet I cannot say that I ever have known many, if any such, to be converted. Sure I am, that God's usual time is in Childhood, or Youth, before they have long abused *Grace*, and wilfully delay'd to turn when they were convinced. Some considerable time I confess, many have before their first Convictions, and Purposes, be brought to any great ripe-

ripeness of performance: But O how dangerous is it to delay!

21. Consider also: *Either Conversion is good or bad for you; either it is needful, or unnecessary. If it be bad, and a needless thing, then let it alone for altogether: But if you are convinced that it is good, and necessary, is it not better now, than to stay any longer?* Is it not the sooner the better? Are you afraid of being safe, or happy too soon? If you are sick, you care not how soon you are well: If you have a Bone out, you care not how soon it is set: If you fall into the Water, you care not how soon you get out: If your House be on Fire, you care not how soon it be quenched: If you are but in Fears by any Doubts, or ill Tidings, you care not how soon your Fears be over. And yet are you afraid of being too soon out of the power of the *Devil*, and the danger of *Hell*; and of being too soon the *Sons of God*, and the holy, justified *Heirs of Heaven?*

22. Consider also: *Either you can turn now, or not. If you can, and yet will not, you are utterly without excuse. If you cannot to day, how much less will you be able hereafter*; when strength is less, and difficulties greater, and burdens more? Is it not time therefore to make out to *Christ* for strength? And should not the very sense of your disability dissuade you from delay?

23. Consider *how long you have staid already*, and put *God's Patience* to it by *your Folly*. Hath not the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, had many Years time of your Life already? Have you not long enough been swallowing the Poison of Sin? And long enough been abusing the *Lord* that made you, and the *Blood of the Son of God*, that was shed for you, and the *Spirit of Grace*, that hath moved and perswaded with you? Are you not yet gone far enough from God? And have you not yet done enough to the damning of *your Selves*, and casting away *everlasting Life*. O wretched Sinners! it is rather time for you, to fall

down on your Faces before the *Lord*, and with *Tears* and *Groans*, to lament it day and night, that ever you have gone so far in Sin, and delayed so long to turn to him as you have done. Sure if after so many Years Rebellion, you are yet so far from lamenting it, that you had rather have more of it, and had rather hold on a little longer, no wonder if God forsake *you*, and let *you* alone.

24. *Have you any hopes of God's Acceptance, and your Salvation, or not? If you have such hopes*, that when *you* turn, God will pardon all *your Sins*, and give *you everlasting Life*: Is it, think *you*, *an ingenious thing to desire to offend him yet a little longer, from whom you* expect such exceeding *Mercy and Glory* as *you* do? Have *you* the Faces to speak out what is in *your* Hearts and Practice, and to go to God with such words as these: *Lord I know I cannot have the pardon of one Sin, without the Blood of Christ, and the Riches of thy Mercy: Nor can I be saved from Hell without it; I beseech thee let me live a little longer in my Sins; a little longer let me trample on the Blood of Christ, and despise thy Commands, and abuse thy Mercies; a little longer let me spit in the Face of thy Goodness, and prefer the Flesh, and the World before thee, and then pardon me all that ever I did, and take me into Glory.* Could you for shame put up such a Request to God as this? If you could, you are past shame: If not, then do not practice and desire that, which you cannot for shame speak out and request.

25. Moreover, *it is an exceeding advantage to you, to come in to God betimes, and an exceeding loss that you will suffer by delay, if you were sure to be converted at the last.* If you speedily come in, you may have time to learn, and get more understanding in the *Matters of God*, than else can be expected: For knowledge will not be had but by time and study. You may also have time to get strength of Grace, when young Beginners can expect no more than an Infant-strength: You may grow to be Men of Parts and Abilities,

Abilities, to be useful in the Church, and latter rain in to those about you, when others cannot? unless they lean on the stronger for support. *Reasonable supcome in betime,* you may do God a great deal of service; which in the evening of the day, you will neither have strength, nor time to do. You may have time to get Assurance of *Salvation,* and to be ready with comfort when death shall call; When a weakling is like to be perplexed with doubts, and fears, and death is like to be terrible, because of their unreadiness.

26. And *did you ever consider, who and how many do stay for you while you delay?* Do *you* know who it is that *you* make to wait your leisure? *God himself* stands over with the offers of his mercy, as if he thought it long till you return, saying, *O that there were such a heart in them! and when will it once be? How long ye simple will you love simplicity, and scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof.* Deut. 5.29. Jer. 13 27. Prov. 1. 22. And do you think it wise, or safe, or mannerly for you to make the *God* of *Heaven* to wait on *you,* while you are serving his Enemy? Can you offer *God* a baser indignity, then to expect that he should support your lives, and feed you, and preserve you, and patiently forbear you while you abuse him to his face, and drudge for the *flesh,* the *world,* and the *Devil?* Should a worm thus use the Lord that made him? You will not your selves hold a candle in your hands, while it burns your own fingers; nor will you hold a nettle or a wasp in your hand to sting you; nor will you keep a dog in your house, that is good for nothing but to snarl at you and bite your Children, or worry your sheep: And yet *God* hath long held up your lives, while in stead of Light, you have yielded nothing but a stinking snuff; and in stead of grapes you have brought forth nothing but thorns and thistles; and while you have snarled at his Children, and his Flock, and done the worst you could against him. And would you indeed

put *God* to wait on you thus, while you serve the *Devil* yet one day more? Must *God* as it were hold the drunkard the candle while he reels and spues? Must he draw the curtain, while the filthy wretch doth once more please his *fleshly lusts*? Marvail not, if he withdraw his *supporting Mercy*, and let such wretches drop into *Hell*.

And it is not God only, but his *Servants, and Creatures and Ordinances*, that all are waiting on you. The *Angels* stay for the joy that is due to them upon your *Conversion*. *Ministers* are studying, and preaching and praying for you. *Godly neighbours* are praying, and longing for your change. The Springs and rivers are flowing for you: The winds blow for you: The Sun shines for you: The clouds rain for you: The Earths bears fruit for you: The beasts must labour, and suffer, and die for you: All things are doing, and would you stand still and do worse? What hast makes the Sun about the world, to return in its time to give you light? What hast make other Creatures in your service? And yet must you delay? Must *God stay*, and *Christ*, and the *Spirit stay*, must *Angels stay*, must *Ministers stay*, must the *Godly stay*, and the *Ordinances stay*, and all the *Creatures stay* your leasure, while you are abusing *God*, and your *Souls*, and others, and while you delay, as if it were too soon to turn?

27. Consider, that *when you were lost, the Son of God did not delay the work of your Redemption.* He presently undertook it, and turned by the stroak of *damning Justice*. In the fulness of time he came and performed what he undertook: he failed not one day of his appointed time. And will you now *Delay* to accept the benefit, and turn to him? Must he make such hast to save you at so dear a rate, and now will you delay to be saved?

28. Moreover, *God doth not delay to do you good:* You have the day and night in their proper seasons: The Sun doth not fail to rise upon you at the appointed time: You have the *Spring*, and *Harvest* in their

their meetest seasons : the former and latter rain in season. When you are in want you have *seasonable supplies*, and when you are in danger, you have *seasonable deliverance :* And is it meet or equal that you should refuse to bring forth *seasonable fruit*, but still be putting off God with your delays.

29. Moreover, *When you are in trouble and necessity, you are then in hast for deliverance, and relief.* Then you think every day a week till your danger or suffering be past. If you be under the pain of a disease, or in danger of death, or under poverty, or oppression, or disgrace, you would have *God* relieve you without delay ; And yet you will not turn to him without delay. Then you are ready to cry out, *How long Lord how long* till deliverance come; but you will not hear *God*, when he cryeth to you in your sins, *How long will it be ere you turn from your transgressions ; when shall it once be ?* When you are to receive any outward deliverance, you care not how soon, the sooner the better : but when you are to turn to *God* and receive his *Grace*, and title to *Glory*, then you care not how late, as if you had no mind of it. Can you for shame beg of *God* to hasten your deliverances, when you remember your delays, and still continue to trifle with him, and draw back ?

30. Your *present prosperity and worldly delights are posting away without Delay* ; and should *you* delay to make sure of better in their stead ? *Time* is going ; and *health* is going ; *youth* is going : yea *life* is going : your riches are taking wing ; fleshly pleasures do perish in the very using ; Your meat and drink is sweet to you little longer then it is in your throat. Shortly you must part with house, and lands, with goods, and friends, and all your mirth, and earthly business will be done. All this you know, and yet will you delay to lay up a *durable treasure* which you may trust upon, and to provide you a better tenement before you be turned out of this ? What will you do for an habitation, for pleasures and contents,

contents, when all that you have now is spent and gone, and Earth will afford you nothing but a grave? If you could but *keep that you have*, I should not much wonder, that knowing so little of *God*, and another world, you look not much after it; But when you perceive *death* knocking at your doors, and see that all your *worldly comforts* are packing up and hasting away, methinks, if you have your wits and sense about you, you should presently turn, and make sure of *Heaven* without any more delay.

31. Consider also *whether it be equal, that you should delay your Conversion; when you can seasonably dispatch your worldly business, and when your flesh would be provided for, you can hearken to it without Delay.* You have wit enough to sow your seed in season, and will not delay it till the time of harvest: You will reap your corn when it is ripe, and gather your fruit when it is ripe, without delay. You observe the seasons in the course of your labours, day by day, and year by year: You will not lie in bed when you should be at your work, nor delay all night to go to your rest, nor suffer your servants to delay, your business; You will know your dinner time, and supper time day by day: If you be sick you will seek help without delay, lest your disease should grow to be uncurable. And yet will you delay your *Conversion*, and the making sure of *Heaven*? Why Sirs, shall these trifles be done without delay, and shall your *Salvation* be put off? In the name of *God* Sirs what do you think of? Do you imagine that you can better suffer *Hell-fire*, then hunger, or nakedness? Or that you can better bear the loss of *Everlasting Joys*, then the loss of your commodities, and provisions in the world? Sure if you believe the life to come, you cannot think so. And can you have while for every thing except that one thing, which all the rest are meerly to promote? and in comparison of which, they are all but dreams? Can you have while to work, to plow, and sow, and reap, and cannot you have while

to prepare for *Eternal Life*? Why Sirs, if you cannot find time yet to search your hearts, and turn to *God*, and prepare for death; give over eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and say, you cannot have time for these. You may as wisely say so for these small matters as the greater.

32. Moreover, *if men offer you courtesies, and commodities for your bodies, you will not stand Delaying, and need so many perswasions to accept them.* If your Landlord would for nothing renew your lease; if any man would give you houses, or lands, would you delay so long before you would accept them? A begger at your door will not only thankfully take your alms, without your intreaty, and importunity, but will beg for it, and be importunate with you to give it. And yet will you delay to accept the *blessed offers of Grace*, which is a greater thing?

33. Yet Consider, that *it is God that is the Giver, and you that are the miserable beggars, and receivers: And therefore it is fitter that you should wait on God, and call on him for his Grace, when he seemeth to delay, and not that he should wait on you.* He can live without your receiving, but you cannot live without his giving. The beggar must be glad of an alms at any time; and the condemned person of a pardon at any time; but the giver may well expect that his gift be received without delay, or else he may let them go without it.

34. And methinks you *should not deal worse with God*, when he comes to you as a Physitian to save your own *Souls, then you would do with a neighbour, or a friend, when it is not for your own good, but for theirs.* If *your* neighbour lay a dying, you would go and visit him without delay. If he fell down in a swoon, you would catch him up without delay; If he fell into the fire, or water, *you* would pluck him out without delay. Yea you would do thus much by a very beast. And yet will you delay when it is not another, but *your* selves, that are sinking, and drowning, and within a step of death and desperation?

delperation? If a woman be but in travail, her neighbours will come to her without delay; And yet when their own Souls are in bondage to sin and Satan, and a state of death, they will let them lie there, year after year, and when we desire them to be Converted, here's nothing but delaies.

35. If yet *you* perceive not how unreasonably *you* deal with God, and your Souls, I beseech *you* consider *whether you do not deal worse with him, then you do with the Devil himself.* If Satan or his servants perswade *you* to sin, you delay not so long but *you* are presently at it; You are ready to follow every tipling companion, or gamester that puts up the finger. You are as ready to go, as they to invite *you*: The very sight of the cup doth presently prevaile with with the drunkard: and the sight of his filthy mate prevaileth with the Fornicator; and sin can be presently entertained without delay. But when God comes, when Christ calls, when the Spirit moveth, when the Minister perswadeth, when Conscience is convinced, we can have nothing after all, but wishes and purposes, and promises, with Delaies. O what a stomack hath that man, or what a brain, that will snatch at poyson, and swallow dung and dirt with greedinesse, without any chewing; and when *you* offer him meat, stands sighing, and looking on it, and hardly will be perswaded to put it in his mouth: and if he do, he is chewing it so long, that at last he even spits it out again, and cannot get it down. Thus deal ungodly wretches, between their poisonous sins, and the saving means, and Grace of Christ.

Nay more then this, so eager are they on their sin, that we are not able to inteat them to delay it. When the passionate man is but provoked, we cannot perswade him to *delay* his rayling language, so long as to consider first of the issue. We cannot intreat the drunkard to put off his drunkennes but for own twelve month, while he tryeth another course: All the ministers in the Country cannot perswade the

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the worldling to forbear his worldlineſs, and the proud perſons their pride, and the ungodly perſon his ungodlineſs, for the ſpace of one month, or week or day. And yet when God hath a command, and a requeſt to them, to Turn to him, and be ſaved, here they they can delay without our intreaty.

36. Conſider alſo that *it is not poſſible for you to turn too ſoon; nor will you ever have cauſe to repent of your ſpeedineſs.* Delay may undo you; but ſpeedy turning can do *you* no harm; I wonder what hurt *you* think it I can do *you*, to be quickly to be reconciled to God! And why then ſhould there be any Delay, where it is not poſſible to be too haſty? Do you think that there is ever a Saint in Heaven, yea or on Earth either that is ſorry that he ſtaid not longer unconverted? No; you ſhall never hear of ſuch a repentance from the mouth of any that is indeed converted.

37. But I muſt tell *you on the contrary* ſide, *That if ever you be ſo happy as to be converted, you will repent it, and an hundred times repent it, that you delayed ſo long before you yielded.* O how it will grieve *you* when *your* Hearts are melted with the *Love of God*, and are overcome with the *infinite kindneſs* of his pardoning, *ſaving Grace*; that ever *you* had the Hearts to abuſe ſuch a God, and deal ſo unkindly with him, and ſtand out ſo long againſt that Compaſſion that was ſeeking *your Salvation?* O how it will grieve your Hearts to conſider, that you have ſpent ſo much of *your Lives* in Sin, for the Devil, and the Fleſh, and the *deceitful World.* O *you* will think with *your ſelves*, Was not God more worthy of my youthful Days? Had I not been better have ſpent it in his Service, and the Work of my Salvation? Alas, that I ſhould waſte ſuch precious days, and now be ſo far behind hand as I am! Now I want that Faith, that Hope, that Love, that Peace, that Aſſurance, that Joy in the Holy Ghoſt, which I might have had, if I had ſpent thoſe Years for God, which I ſpent in the Service of the World,

World, and the Flesh. Then I might have had the Comfort of a well-spent Life, and with Joy have now look'd back upon those Days, and seen the Good I had done to others, and the Honour I had brought to God; whereas I must now look back upon all those Years with sorrow, and shame, and anguish of mind. You will think to your selves then a hundred times, O that I had but that time again to spend for God, which I spent for Sin! And to die for my Soul, which I wasted for my brutish Flesh. Believe it, Sirs, if ever you be converted, you must look for these Repenting Sorrows for all your Delays, (and that is the best that can come of it.) And who would now wilfully make work for Sorrow?

38. And I pray *you* consider, *Whether it belongs of Right to God or you to determine of the day and hour of your coming in?* It is he that must give *you* the Pardon of *your* Sins: And doth it not then belong to him to appoint the time of your receiving it? You cannot have Christ, and Life without him: It is he that must give *you* the Kingdom of Heaven: And he is not worthy then to appoint the time of your *Conversion*, that *you* may be made Partakers of it? But if he say, *To Day*; dare you say, *I'll stay 'till to Morrow?*

39. Nay, consider, *Whether God or you be likelier to know the meetest time?* Dare *you* say, *That you know better when to turn, than God doth?* I suppose *you* dare not. And if *you* dare not say so; for shame let not *your* Practice say so. God saith, *To day, while it is called to day, hear my Voice, and harden not your hearts.* And dare *you* say, *It's better to stay one month longer, or one day longer?* God saith, *Behold this is the accepted time! behold, this is the day of salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. And will *you* say, *It's time enough to morrow?* Do *you* know better than God? If *your* Physician do but tell *you* in a Pleurisie, or a Fever, *you* must let Blood this day before to morrow; *you* will have so much Reason as to submit to his Understanding, and think that he knows

knows better than *you*: And cannot *you* allow as much to the God of Wisdom?

40. Consider also, *That the speediness of your Conversion, when God first calls you, doth make you the more Welcome, and is a thing exceeding pleasing to God.* Our Proverb is, *A speedy Gift is a double Gift.* If you ask any thing of a Friend, and he give it *you* presently, and cheerfully, at the first asking, *you* will think *you* have it with a good will: But if he stand long delaying first, and demurring upon it, *you* will think *you* have it with an ill will, and that *you* owe him the smaller Thanks. If a very Beggar at *your* Door must stay long for an Alms, he will think he is the less beholden to you. How much more may God be displeased, when he must stay so long for his own, and that for *your* benefit? God loveth a *cheerful Giver*, and consequently a *cheerful Obeyer* of his Call: And if it be hearty and cheerful, it is the liker to be speedy without such delays.

41. And I would desire *you*, *but to do with God as you would be done by.* Would *you* take it well of *your* Children, if they should tear all their Cloaths, and cast their Meat to the Dogs, and tread it in the dirt, and when *you* intreat them to give over, they will not regard *you*? Would you stand month after month intreating and waiting on them, as God doth on *you*, in a foolisher Course? Or rather would you not either soundly whip them, or take their Meat from them, till Hunger teach them to use it better? If *your* Servant will spend the whole Day and Year in Drinking and Playing, when he should do *your* Work, will *you* wait on him all the Year with Intreaties, and pay him at last, as if he had served you? And can *you* expect that God should deal so by *you*?

42. And consider I pray *you*, *that your delay is a denial*, and so may God interpret it. For the *time of your turning*, is part of the Command. He that saith *Turn*, saith *Now*, even *To day*, without delay. He giveth *you* no longer *day*: If time be lengthned, and

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the offer made again and again, that's more than he promised *you*, or *you* could have promised *your selves*. His Command is, *Now return and live*. And if *you* refuse the *time*, the *present time*, *you* refuse the Offer, and forfeit the benefit. And if *you* knew but what it is to give God a denial in such a Case as this, and what a Case *you* were in, if he should turn away in Wrath, and never come near *you* more, *you* would then be afraid of jesting with his hot displeasure, or dallying with the Lord.

43. And methinks *you* should remember, *that God doth not stay thus on all, as he doth on you*. Thousands are under burning and despair, and past all remedy, while Patience is waiting yet upon *you*. Can *you* forget that others are in *Hell* at this very hour, for as small Sins as those that *you are yet* intangled, and linger in? *Good Lord*, what a thing is a senseless Heart? That at the same time when Millions are in *Misery*, for delaying or refusing to be *converted*, their Successors should fearlessly venture in their steps. Surely if Faith had but opened *your* Ears to hear the Cries of those damned Souls, *you* durst not imitate them by *your* delays.

44. And I must tell *you*, *that God will not always thus wait on you, and attend you by his Patience, as hitherto he hath done. Patience* hath his appointed time. And if *you* outstay that time, *you* are miserable *Wretches*. I can assure *you*, Sirs, the Glass is turned upon *you*; and when it is *run out*, you shall never have an hour of Patience more: Then God will no more intreat *you* to be *converted*. He will not always stand over *you* with *Salvation*, and say, *O that this Sinner would repent and live! O that he would take the Mercies that I have provided for him!* Do not expect that God should do thus always with *you*: For it will not be.

45. *Your delays do weary the Servants of Christ, that are employed for your recovery. Ministers* will grow weary of preaching to you, and perswading you: When

When we come to Men that were never warned before, we come in hopes that they will hear and *obey:* And this hope puts life and earnestness into our Perswasions: But when we have perswaded Men but a few times in vain, and leave them as we found them, our Spirits begin to droop and flag: Much more when we have preached and perswaded *you* many Years, and still you are the same, and are but where you were. This dulls a Minister's Spirit, and makes him preach heavily and coldly, when he is almost out of heart and hope. I do not justifie Ministers in this, and say, they should do thus: I know they *should not*; and if they were perfect, they *would not:* But they are but Men, and imperfect themselves: And what Man is able to be as lively and fervent in his work, when People stir not, and he sees no good done on the miserable Hearers, as if he had the encouragement of success? O when we do but see the Hearts of hardned, stubborn Sinners relent, and break, and melt before the Power of the Word, and when we hear them cry out for Christ and Mercy, and cry out against themselves for their former Folly, and confess their Sins, and ask us what they shall do to be saved? And are but willing to be ruled by *Christ* the Physician of their *Souls*; this would put life into a Preacher that was cold and dull; this would even make a Stone to speak. But when we tell Men of *God's Threatnings* till they are past believing them, and tell you of *God's Anger*, till they seem to be past fearing it, and tell them of the Plague of *Sin*, till they are past feeling; when instead of preaching Men to *Faith* and *Repentance*, and fear and tenderness of *Heart*, we preach them into greater Unbelief and Carelessness, and dead Stupidity, this is enough to dull or break the Heart of almost any Preacher in the World: What Man is able to follow so fruitless a Work with liveliness? And then it's you that will have the loss and danger of it: When you have dried the Breasts, the Child may famish: If the Preachers could not awake

wake, and change you with all their convincing Arguments, and Fervency, how quietly may you sleep on, when you have flattered them by discouragements? If Satan can either dismount, or make useless these Cannons, that were wont to batter his Garrison, you may then possess *your Souls in peace*. You talk against *Persecutors* that silenced *Ministers*: But, O Sirs, it is *you* that are our greatest Persecutors, that refuse and delay to yield to the *Calls of Christ* by our Ministry, and make us labour so much in vain: Tho' it be not in vain as to our own Souls, *yet you* make it in vain as to *yours*: When we have studied till we almost break our *Brains*, and preached till we have quite broke our *Strength*, and we are consumed, and worn away with Labour and Bodily Pains that it procureth, then you come after, and make us requital by breaking our Hearts by *your Delays*, and refusing to turn and live. Truly, Sirs, I must tell you for my own part, that if it had not been for those that gave me better encouragement by their *Obedience*, I should never have held out with you a quarter of this time: If all had profited as little as some, and all had stuck as fast in an *unconverted State* as some; if the *humble*, *penitent*, *obedient Ones among you*, had not been my Comfort and Encouragement under Christ, I had been gone from *you* many a Year ago, I could never have held out till now: Either my Corruption would have made me run away with *Jonas*, or my Judgment would have commanded me to shake the Dust off my Feet, as a Witness against you, and depart: But to what end do I speak all this to you? To what end? Why, to let you see how you abuse both God and Man, by *your Delays and Disobedience*. You cannot possibly do us that are your *Teachers*, a greater injury or mischief in the World. It is not in your power to wrong us more. Are our Studies, and our Labours worth nothing, think you? Are our Watchings and Waiting worth nothing? Are our Prayers, and Tears, and Groans to be despised? God will not despise them

them, if you do; believe it, he will set them all on your Score, and you will one *Day* have a *heavy Reckoning* of them, and pay full dear for them. Is it equal dealing with us, that when we are watching for *your Souls*, as Men that know we must give an Account, you should rob us of our Comfort, and make us do it with sighs and sorrow? *Heb.* 13. 17. yea, that you should undo all that we are doing, and make us lose our labour and our hopes: And yet do you not think to pay for this? I tell you again, *unconverted Sinners*, we are wearied with your Delays: Many Years we have been perswading you but to turn and live, and yet *yet you* are unturned: You have been convinced long, and thinking on it, and wishing long, and talking of it, and promising long, and yet it is undone, and here is nothing but delays. We see while you delay, Death takes away one this Week, and another the next Week, and you are passing into another World apace; and yet those that are left behind will take no warning, but still delay: We see that Satan delays not while you delay: He is day and night at work against you: If he seem to make a Truce with you, it is that he may be doing secretly, while you suspect him not: We see that Sin delayeth not while you delay: It is working like Poyson, or Infection in your Bodies, and seizing upon your *Vital Powers*; it's every day blinding you more and more; it's hardning your Hearts more, and searing up *your Consciences*, to bring *you* past all feeling and hope: And must we stand by, and see this miserable work with our Peoples Souls, and all be frustrate, and rejected by themselves, that we do for their deliverance? How long must we stand by with the Light in our Hands, while you are serving the Flesh, and neglecting that which we are sent to call you to? It is not our business to hold you the Candle to play by, or to sleep by, or to sin by; these are *Works* that better agree with the *dark*: But God sent us to *you* on another Message; even to light *you* out of *your Sins* to him,

him, that *you* might be saved. Truly, beloved Hearers, I must needs say, that the time seems long, and very long to me, that I have been preaching so many Years to *you* for *Conversion*, and for an *holy, heavenly Life*, ever since I first knew *you*, and that *yet so many of you* are drown'd in Sin and Ignorance, and are unconverted; when I think your very *Consciences* tell *you*, that it is a thing that must be done: I tell *you* all these Years do seem to me a long time, to wait on *you* in vain. Blessed be the Lord that it hath not been in vain with some, or else I would scarce preach any more than one other Sermon to *you*, even to bid *you* Farewel. I pray *you* deal but *fairly* with us, and tell us whether ever *you* will turn or not; if *you* will not, but are resolved for *Sin* and *Hell*, say so, that we may know the worst; speak out *your Minds*, that we may know what to trust to: For if we once *knew you* would not turn, we would soon have done with *you*, and leave *you* to the *Justice of God*. But if still you say, *You will turn: When will you do it?* You will do it, and *you hope you shall:* But when? How long would you have us wait yet? Have you not abused us enough? Nay, I must tell you, *that you even weary God himself.* It is his own expression, *Mal.* 2. 17. *Isa.* 43. 24. *Thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities*, Isa. 1. 14. And I must say to you as the Prophet, *Isa.* 7. 13. *Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but you will weary my God also?* Consider what it is that you do.

46. Consider also that *you are at a constant unspeakable loss every day and hour that you Delay your Conversion.* O little do you know what you deprive your selves of every day. If a slave in the Gallies, or prison, might live at Court as a Favourite of the Prince, in honour, and delight, and ease, would he delay either years, or hours? Or would he not rather think with himself. *It is not better to be at ease, and in honour then to be here?* As the Prodigal said, *How many hired servants of my father have bread enough: and to spare,*

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nd I perish with hunger! All this while I might be n plenty, and delight. All the while that you live n sin, you might be in the favour of God; in the igh and Heavenly employments of the *Saints*; you ight have the comforts of daily Communion with Christ, and with the Saints; you might be aying up for another world, and might look death n the face with Faith and confidence, as one that annot be conquered by it; you might live as the leirs of Heaven on Earth. All this and more then this, ou loose by your delays; All the Mercies of God are ost upon you; Your food and rayment, your health nd wealth, which you set so much by, all is but lost and vorse then lost, for they turn to your greater hurt; All our pains with *you*, and all the Ordinances of God which you possess; and all *your* time is lost and worse. And do you think it indeed a wise mans part to ive any longer at such a loss as this, and that wilfully nd for nothing? If you knew your loss, you would ot think so.

47. Nay more, *you are all this while doing that which must be undone again, or you will be undone for ever.* You are running from God; but you must come ack again, or perish when all is done. You are learning n hundred carnal lessons, and false conceits, that must e all unlearnt again; You are shutting up your yes in wilful ignorance; which must be opened again; You must learn the Doctrine of Christ, the great eacher of the Church, if *you* stay never so long, r else you shall be cut off from his people, *Acts* 3. 2. & 7. 37. When *you* been long accustoming our selves to sin, you must unlearn, and break ll those customes again; You are hardning your earts daily, and they must again be softened. And I ust tell you, that though a little time, and labour may erve to do mischief, yet it is not quickly undone a-ain. You may sooner set *your* house on fire, than uench it when *your* have done. You may sooner cut and round *your* bodies, then heal them again; And

sooner catch a cold, or a disease, then cure it; You may quickly do that which must be longer a undoing. Besides; the cure is accompanied with pain; You must take many a bitter draught, in groans or tears of Godly sorrow, for these delaies; The wounds that *you* are now giving *your* Souls, must smart, and smart again, before they are searcht and healed to the bottom. And what man of wisdom would make himself such work and sorrow? Who would travail on an hour longer, that knows he is out of his way, and must come back again? Would *you* not think him a mad man that would say, I will go on a little further, and then I will turn back?

I know *Mr. Bilney* the Martyr was offended with this comparison, because he thought it was against Free Grace. But comparisons, extend not to every respect. There are Two things in *your* sins to be undone; the one is the Guilt, and the other is the Habit and power of sin: the first indeed is done away, when *you* are Converted: but at the cost of Christ; which should not be made light of: Aud yet some scars may be left behind, and such twigs of Gods rod may fall upon *you*, as shall make *you* wish *you* had come sooner in. And for the habit of sin, though Conversion break the heart of it, yet will it live and trouble *you* while *you* live: and those sins that now you are strenthening by your delays, will be thorns in your sides, and rebels in *your* Country, and find you work as long as *you* live. And thus I may well say that *you* are doing that while *you* delay, that must be long in undoing, and will not be undone so easily as it is done; and you are going on that way, that must be all trod backward.

48. And methinks if it were but this, it should terrifie *you* from your Delays; that it *is likely to make your Conversion more grievous, if you should have so great Mercy from God, as after all to be Converted.* There is very *few scape* that are so exceeding long in travail, but if you come to the birth, its like to be with dou

double pain. For God must send either some grievous affliction to fire and frighten *you* out of *your* sins, or else some terrible gripes of Conscience that shall make you groan, and groan again, in the feeling of your folly. The pangs and throws of Conscience, in the work of Conversion, are far more grievous in some then in others. Some are even on the wrack, and almost brought besides their wits, and the next step to desperation, with horror of Soul, and the sense of the Wrath of God; so that they lie in doubts and complaints many a year together; and think that they are even forsaken of God. And to Delay your Conversion, is the way to draw on either this or worse.

49. Consider also, that *Delays are contrary to the very nature of the work, and the nature of you Souls themselves.* If indeed you ever mean to turn, it is a work of haste and violence, and diligence that you must need set upon: *You must strive to enter in, for the gate is strait, the way is narrow that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able,* Luke 13. 24, 25. *When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, he shall answer, I know you not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity,* 27. It is a race that you are to run, and Heaven is the prize. *And you know that they which run in a race, run all: but one receiveth the prize: and therefore, you must so run, as that you may win and obtain,* 1 Cor. 9. 24, 25. And what is more contrary to this then Delay? You are Souldiers in fight, and your Salvation lieth on the victory; and will you trifle in such a case, when death or life is even at hand? You are travailers to another world, and will you stay till the day is almost past before you will begin your journey? Christianity is a work of that infinite consequence, and requireth such speedy and vigorous dispatch, that Delay is more unreasonable

reasonable in this then any thing in all the world.

And besides, your Souls are Spirits of an excellent active nature, that will not be kept idle: and therefore Delay is unsuitable to their excellency. The best and noblest creatures are most active: The basest are most dull, and unfit for action: The earth will stand still: You may easily keep clods and stones from moving: But fire and winds that are purer things, and the Sun, and such nobler sublimer creatures, you are not able to keep idle for an hour. Who can cause the Sun to delay its *Course*? or who can stay the ascending flames? And therefore to your more excellent immortal Souls, and that in a work that must needs be done, how exceeding unsuitable are Delays?

50. If all this will not serve turn, let me tell you, that *while you are Delaying, your Judgement doth not delay; and that when it comes, these Delays will multiply your misery, and the remembrance of them will be your Everlasting torment.* What ever you are thinking of, or what ever you are doing, your dreadful doom is drawing on apace; and misery will overtake you, before you are aware. When you are in the Ale-house little thinking of damnation, even then is your damnation coming in haste: when you are drown'd in the pleasures, or cares of the world, your judgement is still hastening, *You* may delay, but it will not delay. It is the saying of the Holy Ghost, 2 *Pet.* 2. 3. *Whose judgement now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbreth not.* You may slumber, and that so carelesly, that we cannot awake you, but *your* damnation slumbereth not, nor hath not done of a long time while you thought it slumbred: and when it comes, it will awaken *you*. As a man that is in a Coach on the road, or a boat on the water, what ever he is speaking, or thinking, or doing, he is still going on, and hastening to his journeys end, or going down the stream: So whatever you think, or speak, or do, whether you believe it, or

or mock at it, whether you sleep or wake, whether *you* remember it or forget it, *you* are hastening to damnation, and *you* are every day a day nearer to it then before: and it is but a little while till you shall feel it. *Behold the judge standeth before the door*, Jam. 5. 9. The Holy Ghost hath told *you*, *The Lord is at hand*, Phil. 4. 5. *The day is at hand*; *the time is at hand*; *the end of all things is at hand*, Rom. 13 12. Rev. 22, 10. 1 Pet. 4. 7. *Behold*, saith the Lord, *I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be*, Rev. 22. 12. And do you as it were see the Judge approaching, and damnation hasting on, and yet will *you* delay?

And withall consider, that when it comes, it will be most sore to such as *you*; and then what thoughts do you think *you* shall have of these Delays? You are unable to conceive how it will torment your Consciences, when you see that all *your* hopes are gone, to think what *you* have brought *your* selves to, by your trifling; To feel *your* selves in remediless misery, and remember how long the Remedy was offered you, and you delayed to use it, till is was too late. To see that you are for ever shut out of Heaven, and remember that you might have had it as well as others; but you lost it by Delay. Oh then it will come with horrour into your mind, *How oft was I perswaded and told of this? how oft had I inward motions to return? how oft was I purposed to be holy, and to give up my heart and life to God? I was even ready to have yielded; but I still delayed, and now it is too late.* Then you shall pay for all our warnings, and all the Sermons and motions which you lost.

And now having laid you down no less then fifty moving Considerations, if it be possible to save *you* from these Delays, I conclude with this Request to *you*, whoever you be that read these words; that you would but consider of all these Reasons, and then entertain them as they deserve. There is not one of them that *you* are able to gainsay, much less all

of them. If after the reading of all these, you can yet believe, that you have reason to delay, *your* understandings are forsaken of God; But if *you* are forced to confess that you should not Delay, what will you do then? Will you obey God, and your own Consciences, or will you not? Will you Turn this hour without delay? Take heed of denying it, lest you have never such a motion more: You know not, but God that calls you to it, may be resolved, that it should be *now or never.* I do beseech you, yea as his messenger I charge you in his Name, that you Delay not an hour longer, but presently be resolved, and make an unchangeable Covenant with God; and as ever you would have favour in that day of *your* distress, delay not now to accept his favour, in the day of your visitation. O what a blessed family were that, which upon the Reading of this, would presently say, *We have done exceeding foolishly in Delaying so great a matter so long: Let us agree together to give up your selves to God without any more delay. This shall be the day: we'l stay no longer. The flesh, and the world, and the Devil, have had too much already: Its a wonder of patience that hath born with us so long: we will abuse the patience of God no longer, but begin to be absolutely his this day.* If this may be the effect of these exhortations, you shall have the everlasting blessing: But if still you Delay, I hope I am free from the guilt of your Blood.

Direct. XII. The last Direction that I shall give you, for preventing your miscarriage in the work of Conversion is this: *Stop not in weak and wavering Purposes and faint attempts: but see that you be groundedly, unreservedly and habitually* (or firmly) *Resolved.*

There are many good thoughts and meanings in the Soul, before *Resolution*: but you are not truly Converted, till you are Resolved, and thus *Resolved* as is here expresst. Here I shall shew *you*, 1. What this

is *Resolution* is. 2. Why it is so necessary: and 3. shall urge you to resolve: and 4. I shall Direct *you* to it.

1. *Resolution is the firm or prevalent Determination of the Will upon Deliberation.*

In opening this Definition, I shall first shew you how we are led up to Resolution by Deliberation: and 2. What is this Determination of the Will.

There are several steps by which the will doth rise up to Resolution, which I shall set before you. And first it is presupposed that in the state of corrupted Nature, the Soul is *unresolved* for God if not (in many that are exceeding wicked) *Resolved against* him. At first the sinner doth either *Resolve* to be as he is, or else he hath no Resolution to Return. But God breaks many a wicked *Resolution*, or else wo to the ungodly; for there were no hope. Many wicked wretches, have not only neglected their Souls, but also Resolved, that they would never lead a Holy life, nor never joyn themselves to the Communion of Saints, nor never leave their drunken company, or be so precise, and make so great a matter of sin, as the Godly do. When we urge them with the plainest Words of God, and the most unquestionable Reasons, so that they have not a word of sense to speak against it: when we have told them of the Command of God, and told them of the certain danger of their Souls, they will plainly tell us, that they are *Resolved* never to be so precise: When they have nothing else to say, but nonsence, they will put us off with this, that they are *Resolved* to venture their Souls without so much ado. But as Resolute as they are, God will break and change their *Resolution*, and make them as nuce Resolved of the clean contrary, if ever he will save them. For wo to them that ever they were born, if he should take them at their word, and Resolve as they Resolve!

Now in this case there are many degrees that men go through, before they come to be *Resolved* for God. 1. The first thing usually that befalleth such a Soul, is some further *Light*, which shews him that which before he understood not. 2. This Light causeth him to begin to *Doubt*, whether all be so well with him as he thought it had been; and whether he were so wise in his former Resolutions as he thought himself. 3. When Light hath bred these Doubtings in his mind, these Doubtings breed some *Fears* within him, and he begins to be a little awakened; lest evil be nearer him then he was aware of, and lest the threatenings of God and his Ministers should prove true. 4. These *Fears* do drive him to *Consider* of the matter, and to *Deliberate* what he is best to do: To consider whether these things be so or not, and what course he must take if they should prove true. 5. Though sometimes God may bless the very first Considerations to be the present means of true conversion, yet that is no usual thing; but ordinarily the first Considerations do help the mind to some slight convictions, so that the man begins to see a great deal more then he did before; and so much as puts him now past doubt that he was before mistaken, and out of the way. 6. Finding himself in this case, his fears increase, and his grief comes on for his former folly, and he finds himself in a miserable case, and at a loss for a Remedy. 7. By this much he is quickned to a purpose or resolution, to hearken to those that can instruct him, and enquire of them that he thinks are in the right, and to use such means as he is acquainted with, to find out what he must do to be saved. And accordingly he goes among good company, and begins to hear more diligently, and sensibly, and to mark and regard what he hears and reads; and also to cry to God in Prayer for mercy and relief. But all this is but from the Natural Fear of Misery, awakened in him by Common preparing Grace. 8. In the use of these Means of Grace, he begins better to understand, and

and relish the Doctrine of Redemption by Jesus Christ, and the nature and necessity of true Sanctification by the Holy Ghost. And though sometimes these Evangelical Illuminations may be special saving works at the very first, yet its more usual, especially with us that are bred up under the Gospel, to have a more superficial common Illumination, before the saving Light come in. And by this common Light, Men have at first but a general glimmering, and confused Knowledge of a Saviour, and of Redemption, and of Mercy to be had by him. And sometimes they have a distinct Knowledge of *some parts only* of the Christian Faith; and sometimes a *distinct* Knowledge and belief of *every Article*; but only *superficial*, and not savingly effectual. 9. By this general or superficial Knowledge of Christ, and Mercy, a kind of Hope ariseth in the heart, that yet there is a possibility of escape, and a kind of comfort answerable to this Hope. 10. These Hopes are accompanied with some *Desires* to understand yet more of the Mystery of the Gospel; and to be made partakers of the saving Mercy of which he hath had a confused Light.

11. And hereupon there is further kindled in the will, a Purpose, or Resolution to go further on in learning, and enquiring into the Will of God, and using his means: And 12. This purpose is performed, and means are further used. And thus far the Soul is but in preparation, and under the common works of Grace, and possibly may fall off and perish. The first degree may be so stifled, that it shall not reach unto the second; or the second so stifled that it shall not reach unto the third: But the most common stop is at the third degree; when Men are a little frightned, they will not follow it on to Consideration: And they that follow Consideration diligently, do usually speed well, and get through all the rest.

But when the Soul is brought thus far, if God will save it, he next proceeds to this much more; 1. He giveth a clearer Light into the Soul, which giveth a more distinct, or at least a more piercing, convincing, deep and savoury apprehensions of the essentials of Christianity than he ever had before.

Where note of this special Heavenly light, 1. That *being* usually the Consequent of a more common knowledge, therefore most ordinarily the sum of Christian Doctrine is in some manner known before. 2. That it doth not reveal only some one point of Faith alone, and then another, and so on; as if we savingly knew one essential point of Faith, when we have no saving Knowledge of the rest; for that is a Contradiction. But finding all these Truths received in the mind before by a common Knowledge, the special light comes in upon them all at one; and so shews us the Anatomy of Christianity, or the part of Gods Image in one frame, as to the essentials. 3. For the understanding of which you must further know, that there is such an inseparable connection of these Truths, and such a dependence of one upon another, that it is not possible to know one of them truly, and not know all. For example, Believing in Jesus Christ, is an act so inseparable from the rest, that (if the essentials of Christianity be not essential to it) certainly you cannot do this without them. For to believe in Christ, is essentially to believe in him as God and Man, two Natures in one Person, by Office the Mediator, our Redeemer and Saviour, to save us from guilt and sin, from punishment and pollution, and to give us by the Holy Ghost, a Holy nature and life, and to give us the forgiveness of sin, and Everlasting life, and so to restore us to the mutual Love of God here, and fruition of him hereafter: and all this as merited and procured by his Death, Obedience, Resurrection, Ascension, and Intercession for his Church. Whether here be all that is Essential to Christianity, and abso-

absolutely necessary to Salvation to be believed, I leave to consideration; but sure I am that all this is Essential to saving Justifying Faith. And Christ is not taken as Christ, if he be not thus taken: For the ends thus enter the definition of his Relation as the Redeemer, and Saviour and Lord.

So that the Love of God as our felicity and End, and the belief in Christ as the way, are both together in the same minute of time, which soever of them be first in order of nature: (which is a question that I dare not here so unseasonably handle)

2. Upon this special Illumination of the Soul, and the special Consideration with which it doth concur, the Deliberating Soul is presently Resolved. And in these two Acts which always go together, consisteth the special Sanctifying Work, Even in the *Illumination* and *Estimation* of the Understanding, and in the true *Resolution* of the Will.

2. The Determination of the Will, is its own free act, performed by its natural self-determining power, procured by the special Grace of God (I mean in this special case) It followeth Deliberation. While we are unresolved, we Deliberate what to Resolve upon; that is, we are considering which is best and most eligible, and which not; and as we practically judge, we use to Determine, and to choose. And when this choice after Deliberation is peremptory and full, its called Resolution.

So that my meaning is to let you understand, that when the Matter of our Faith is set open to the Soul, it is not a wavering fickle purpose, that is a saving closure with it, but it must be a *firm Resolution*. Much less will it ever bring a Man to Heaven, to be *thinking and deliberating* what to do, as long as he is unresolved. And now I shall prove the Necessity of this.

II. The

II. Till you are Resolved, you are not Converted, and that appeareth by these Evidences. 1. If you are not *firmly Resolved*, it is certain that you do not *firmly* believe. For such as your *Belief* is, such will be the effects of it upon the *Will*. An unsound Opinionative belief, will produce but tottering, languishing purposes; but a firm belief will cause a firm Resolution of the Will. And if your belief be unsound, you must confess you are unconverted.

2. Moreover, if you do not esteem God above all Creatures, and Heaven above Earth, and Christ and Grace above Sin, you are certainly unconverted. But if you have such a true *estimation*, you will certainly have a firm Resolution. For you will Resolve for that which you highly esteem.

3. If God have not your firm Resolution, he hath not indeed your Heart and Will: For to give God your Hearts and Wills, is principally by firm Resolving for him. And if God have not your Hearts, you are sure unconverted.

4. Moreover, if you are not firmly Resolved, your Affections will not be *sincere and stedfast*. For all the *Affections* are such as to their *sincerity*, as the *Will* is, which doth excite or command them. And nothing is more mutable than the *Affections* in *themselves* considered: They will be hot to day, and cold tomorrow, if they be not rooted in the *firm Resolution* of the *Will*, which is the life of them.

5. Lastly, Without a *firm Resolution*, there can be no *faithful obedience* and *execution* of the Will of God. For if Men be not *Resolved*, they will heavily go on, and lazily proceed, and easily come off; For their hands go to work without their hearts. It is the greatest work in all the world, that God calls you to: and none but the *Resolved* are able to go through with it. Of which we shall give you a fuller account anon.

III. In

III. In the next place let me intreat you, in the fear of God, to look after this great and Necessary part of your Conversion. There are many degrees of good motions in the mind; but all that falls short of Resolution is unsound. Many are brought to Doubt whether all be well with them, and to have some fears thereupon, that yet will not be brought so far as to consider soberly of the matter, and deliberate what is best to be done, and to advise with their Ministers for the furthering of their Salvation. Many that are perswaded so far as to consider, and deliberate, and take advice, yet go no further then some cold wishes or purposes, which are all overcome by the Love of the World, and the power of their sins. Many that do proceed to some kind of Practice, do only take a taste or an essay of Religion, to try how they can like it; and begin some kind of outward Reformation, without any firm Resolution to go through with it: Or if their purposes seem strong, it is but occasioned by something without, and not from a setled habit within. All these are short of a state of special Saving Grace, and must be numbred with the unconverted.

It is a common, and very dangerous mistake, that many are undone by, to think that every good Desire is a certain sign of Saving Grace: Whereas you may have more then *bare Desires*, even *purposes*, and *promises*, and *some performances*, and yet perish for want of *Resolution* and *Regeneration*. Do you think that *Judas* himself had not some *good Desires*, that followed Christ so long, and preached the Gospel? Do *you* think that *Herod* had not some *good Desires*, that heard *John* gladly, and did many things accordingly? *Agrippa* had some *good Desires*, when he was almost perswaded to be a *Christian*. They that for a time believe, have sure some *good Desires*; and more, *Matth.* 13. 20. And so had the young Man, that went away sorrowful from Christ, when he could not

not be his Disciple, unless he would part with *all* that he had, *Luke* 18. 23. *Matth.* 19. 22. And doubtless those had more than good Desires, that had *known the way of Righteousness, and had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21. And so had those, *Heb.* 10. 28, 29. that had *received the knowledge of the Truth, and were Sactified by the blood of the Covenant.* And those *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. that *were once enlighted, and tasted of the Heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come.* And sure *Ananias* and *Saphira* had more then some *good Desires*, when they *sold all, and brought half the price to the Apostles.*

Believe it Sirs, there are none of your Desires, or Endeavours, that will serve turn, to prove you in a state of Grace, unless they be accompanied with firm Resolution. Be it known to *you* that *you* are unconverted, if *you* are not *habitually Resolved.* And therefore I must here intreat *you* all, to put the question close to *your* Hearts, Are *you Resolved, firmly Resolved*, to give up *your* selves and all to Christ, and to be wholly his, and follow his conduct? or are *you* not? The question is not, what good meanings, or wishes, or purposes, *you* may have, but whether *you* are *Resolved*, and *firmly Resolved?* Take heed Sirs, what *you* venture *your* Souls upon: God will not be dallied with, nor be deceived. He will have no *unresolved*, false-hearted servants.

Before I proceed to urge *you* further, I shall here tell *you* what *kind* of *Resolution* it must be, that will prove a Man *converted:* and then I shall give *you* such *Motives* as should perswade *you* to it.

It is not *all kind* of *Resolution* that will serve turn; but it is only that which hath these following properties, that will evidence a state of Grace.

1. As

1. As to the *Matter*, it must be the whole Essence of Christianity, that must be Resolved on. It must be no less then a closing with God as your chiefest happiness, to be loved above all, and as your chiefest Lord to be obeyed before all: and a closing with Jesus Christ as your only Saviour, your Teacher, and your Lord; to bring your hearts again to God, and reconcile *you* to him: and a closing with the Holy Ghost as *your* Sanctifier, to make you a holy people, and cleanse you from all your sin of heart and life, and guide *you* by the Ministry, Word, and Ordinances, to Everlasting life. Thus must *you* Resolve to deliver up *your* selves to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be made a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Should you be never so Resolute in some point of Religion, and as *Ananias* to give God Half, and to become half Religious, and half Holy, and half Heavenly, this is but to be half Christians, and will not bring *you* half way to Heaven: Its entire Christianity that must be Resolved on.

2. You must also be *Resolved* for *present* obedience, and to turn without any more delay; and not only Resolve to turn to *morrow*, or sometime hereafter. No Resolution is sincere in this case, if it be but for the future: If you had rather stay but one day or hour longer in the state of sin, and service of the flesh, *you* are no true Disciple of Christ, though *you* should be Resolved to turn to morrow.

3. And *your* Resolution must be *Absolute* and peremptory, nor only *without* any secret *Reserves*, but *Positively* against any such Reserves. Here it is that *Hypocrites* commonly fall short; They see they must mend, and they are convinced that a holy life is necessary, and they Resolve hereupon to change their course, and turn religious; but either it is with this secret Reserve, *Provided always that I look to my credit or estate, or life, what ever I do, and provided that I go no further in Religion then will stand with these; provided that godliness be not my undoing in the world.*

world. Or else if he have not actually such thoughts, he hath them always virtually, and habitually: He is not Resolved against such Reserves; he hath not considered that Christ will have no Disciples that cannot and will not part with all; and that if he hope for Heaven, he must not look for a treasure on earth, but only pass through the world as a travailer, or labour in it as the harvest of the Lord, in expectation of a Reward and Rest hereafter; and so Resolve to take Christ on these self-denying terms. But he that will be saved, must be thus resolved, Even to sell *all*, to buy the unvaluable *pearl*, Matth. 13. 46, 47. To make sure of Heaven, though he loose all on Earth by it; to lay up his hopes in the life to come, and venture, and let go all rather than those hopes: to take Christ absolutely upon his own terms, for better and worse, as being certain there is no other way to life, and that there is no danger of losing by him. The Hypocrite is like a man that when he delivereth up the possession of his house, will make his bargain, that he will keep this room, or that room to himself, for his own use. Or like a servant that will not be hired but on Condition, that his Master shall not set him to such or such work that he loves not: But Christ will have no such servants; You must deliver up all to him, or he will accept of none; You must give him leave to make his Conditions for *you*, and tell *you* on what terms *you* must serve him, and wholly refer the matter to him, even for life its self, and not offer to put Conditions upon him, and think to bring *him* to any terms of yours. It is not true Resolution unless it be absolute, and unreserved, and against all reserves; Yea, and that also as to perseverance; that you Resolve to give up your selves finally as well as *totally*, not only without any Reserve of a Revocation, but against any such Revocation. It must not be a coming to Christ upon essay, or meer tryal, that if *you* do not like *you* may leave again; But you must make an unchangeable everlasting Covenant;

venant; It must be part of your Covenant that you will never revoke it.

Moreover, your Resolution must be *well grounded*; You must know what the *Essentials* are of that Religion which you resolve on, and you must be moved to it by right and weighty Considerations; and go upon reasons that will hold up your Resolution. For should you Resolve on the most necessary work (as this is) upon mistakes, and wrong or insufficient Reasons, as the will of man, the custom of the country, the Reputation of Christianity, or only such like, there is no likelyhood that your Resolution should endure, and it is not sincere while it doth endure.

5. Your Resolution must be accompanied with a *sense of your own insufficiency*, to stand to it immutably, and execute it faithfully by your own strength; as knowing the corruption, and deceitfulness of your own heart; And it must be strenghtned and supported by a *confidence*, or *dependence* on the *sufficiency of Christ*, on whose Grace, and Spirit you must rely, both for the continuing, and the performing of your Resolutions; as knowing that without him you can do nothing, but that you can do all things (necessary) through Christ strengthning you.

6. Lastly, Your Resolution is not Savingly sincere, unless it be *habitually*. It is a very hard question, how far some moving exhortation, or the approach of death in sickness, may prevail with the unsanctified for an *Actual* Resolution; Undoubtedly very far; But that's a mans mind and will which is *Habitually* his mind and will; When the very Inclination, and bent of your will is Right, then only is your heart right. A bowle may by a rub, or bank, be turned contrary to the byas; but when it is over the rub it will follow the byas again in its ordinary course. The flame may be hindred from ascending a little while, but when it is got over the stop, it will be mounting upward. A stone will move upwards against its

its Nature, while it is followed by the strength of the hand that cast it; but when the strength is spent, it will quickly fall again. It is not an extraordinary act, that you can try your selves by, but such a free course and tenor of your lives, as will prove that you have a *new Nature*, or a *heart Inclined and Habituated to God*. The main business therefore is to prove, that you are *Habitually Resolved*. Set all these together now, and you may see what Resolution it is that must prove you to be Converted. 1. It must be a Resolution for all the Essence of Christianity, and not only some part. 2. It must be a Resolution for present Obedience, and not only for some distant time to come. 3. It must be an Absolute, peremptory Resolution, without and against *Reserves* for the flesh, both *Total*, and final; without and against any Revocation. 4. It must be *soundly grounded*; and moved by *right principles*. 5. It must be joined with an *humble sence of your insufficiency*, and a dependence on Christ, for continuing, and performing it. And 6. It must be *Habitual*, and such as sets right the bent and drift of heart and life. All this is of Necessity.

Well Sirs; you see now what you *must* do; the next question then is, what you *will* do? A great many of motions God hath made to you, to let go your worldlinesse, and wickedness, and become New Creatures, and live to God, and never could you be got to Resolve, and obey them. Many thoughts you have had of it, I suppose; and long you have been purposing that, Turn you would; but all hath come to little or nothing, because you were never fully Resolved. I am once more sent to you on this message from God, to see whether yet you will Resolve: Whether after all your trifling delays, and after all *your* wilful sinning and abuse of Gods Patience, against your own knowledge and Consciences, you will yet Resolve. What say *you*? Shall God be your Master indeed and Shall Christ be your Saviour and Lord? Shall Heave

Heaven be *your* happiness, and have *your* hearts indeed? Shall Holiness be *your* business indeed, and shall sin be your hatred, and the flesh and the world be *your* enemies indeed, and used accordingly from this day forward, without any more ado? I beseech you Sirs Resolve, and fully Resolve.

And because I know if we prevail not with *you* in this, *you* are undone for ever, and therefore I am loth to let you go before we have brought you, if it may be, to Resolve; I will give you here some Considerations to turn the scales, and if you will but read them, and soberly consider of them, I shall have great hope to prevail with you, yet after all. One would think that the fifty Considerations under the last Direction might suffice; But lest all should be too little, I will add these following.

1. Consider I beseech you, *what leisure you have had to think of the matter.* You have lived many years in the world already; and you have had nothing to do in it, but to seek after true Happiness; Even your worldly labours ought to have been all but in order to this. And yet are you unresolved? Alas Sirs, have you lived some twenty, some thirty years and more in the world, and yet are you not Resolved, what you came hither for, or what you have to do here? Is it twenty, or thirty, or fourty years since you set out, and should by this time have been far on your journey, and are you yet *unresolved whether* to go, or *which way* to go? as if you were newly entring the world, or as if you had never heard of your business. I think so many years are a fair time of Consideration, and its time to be Resolved, if *you* will Resolve at all.

2. And I *pray you* consider, *what helps you have had to have Resolved you before this.* If *you* did not know what *you* had to look after, and which *way* to take, *you* should have enquired; You had the Word of God to advise with; and *you* had *your* Teachers to advise with; and *many* experienced Christians to advise

vise with. You wanted not for the wisest faithfulest Counsellers; if *you* had been but willing and diligent, certainly you might have been Resolved long ago.

3. And consider I beseech *you*, what a case it is that you are unresolved in; Is it so hard a question that all this time, and all these helps cannot Resolve *you*? What whether God or the flesh should be first obeyed, and loved? Whether Heaven or Earth, Eternal Glory or the transitory pleasures of sin should be preferred? Whether you should care and labour more to be saved from sin and Hell, or from poverty and worldly crosses, and reproaches? These, and such like are the questions to be resolved; And are these so hard, that all your wit, and all the advice *you* can have from Scripture and ministers, wou'd not serve turn to help you to a Resolution, no not in twenty or thirty years time? O wonderful? that ever the Devil should be able so to befool men! That Reasonable Creatures should be so phrenitick that they cannot be resolved whether it be better to be saved, or be damned? or whether sin with Hell after it, be better than Holiness with Heaven after? The Lord have Mercy upon the poor distracted world, and bring some more of them to their wits! We have *Wise men*, if themselves may be judges, very wise in their own conceit, that know many great matters in the world, and yet do not practically know whether God or the Devil be the better Master; whether sin or Holiness be the better work; and whether Heaven or Hell be the better wages? If they say *They know* these things, judge by their lives whether they *know* them *Practically* or not? *Resolve* they will not for God and Holiness, and Heaven, nor against the flesh, the world, and sin; whatever they may be brought to confess to their self condemnation. Is it not a pitiful case, that such points as these, should seem so hard to reasonable men, as to be so long in Resolving of them?

4. And

4. And I Pray you Consider, *How horribly by this you disgrace your understandings,* You that cannot abide to be derided as sots and fools in the world, do *yet* abuse your selves thus grosly, as if there were never greater sots scarce upon the Earth. We have proud men that are so high in their own eyes, that they can hardly endure contempt from others, and love almost none that think but meanly or dishonourable of them; and yet what a horrible contempt and dishonour do they cast upon themselves? If one of these our wise neighbours, should study seven years, to know whether the Sea be fire or water, whether a mountain be heavy? Whether the fire be hot or cold? and could not be Resolved after so many years Consideration; what would *you* think and say of these wise men? Why Sirs it is far grosser folly, I tell *you* again, it is far grosser folly, to be unresolved whether you should be holy or unholy? which is in plain English, whether it be better go to Heaven or to Hell? For Faith and Holiness is the way to Heaven; and an unholy life is the way to Hell: and if *you* will needs forsake the *way* to Heaven, you may hope to come thither as long as *you* will; but *you* may as well hope to touch the Moon with *your* finger, or to run up and down with a Mountain on *your* backs. And if you will hold on in the *way* to Hell, that is in an unsanctified state, *you* may *say you* hope for all that to escape Hell, even as wisely as to leap into the Sea, and say I hope to scape drowning, or to throw down your selves headlong from the top of the steeple, and say I hope to scape hurting me, as well as *you*. Sirs, I beseech *you* do not abuse God, and abuse Christ, and the Spirit and Scripture, and withal abuse your immortal Souls, for I know not what; for a stinking sin; for a thing of nought; Your Souls are noble Creatures, and *your* understandings are noble faculties, Why will you expose them to be the scorn of Satan, and make them so base and sottish as you do? You can see the folly of a poor drunkard, that will make a beast

beast of himself, and go reeling and talking nonsence about the streets, for the boys to hoot at him, and make himself the laughing stock of the Town; And I pray *you* why do *you* not understand, that till you are Resolved for a Holy, Heavenly life, *you* are all drunk, while you think *your* selves to be sober? You are as miserable as the other, and more in this, that *yours* is in *your* natures, and theirs is but an accident: yours is continued, and theirs (in that particular) but by fits. In the Name of God Sirs, bethink *you*, whether *you* can possibly more disgrace *your* wits, then to be unresolved of a case as plain as the High way, and which *your* Everlasting Salvation or damnation lieth on? If one of you could not in twenty years be Resolved, whether the Sun be light or dark, or whether the day or the night be fitter for rest; or whether it be better plow or sow, or let all alone, and hope God will give *you* a crop without labour: would *you* take this for a wise man? Again I tell *you*, your folly is more gross, that cannot all this while be Resolved, whether *you* should cast away *your* wilfull sins, and give up *your* selves to Christ, and a Holy life, to obtain the Glory, and scape the misery that is hard at hand. If *you* stood but in a storm of rain, *you* would not be so long in deliberating, whether it were better for you to stay there longer or come out. If your finger were but in the fire, you need not so long a deliberation, whether you should take it out. And yet these wise men, are under many thousand unpardoned sins, and under the curse of the Law of God, and within a step of everlasting fire, and have no way possible to escape, but by Conversion, Faith and Holiness: and this God hath told them, as plain as the tongue of man can speak, and *yet* they are *Considering* of it, whether it be best to come out of it: and *yet* they cannot be resolved. Did I say, They are *Considering*? Nay, the Lord be merciful to them they are so dead hearted and besotted, that *they* do not so much as *seriously Consider* of it: but

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even run on without Consideration : Ah poor wretches ! They are ready to go to another world, and may look every day when the bell toles for them, and when death will bring them to their endless life, and yet they have not wit enough to Resolve whether they should make ready : no nor wit enough in their most careless, worldly state, to know that they are unready. Death is coming, and Judgement is coming, and the burning Wrath of God is coming, and are even at the door : and yet these wise men are unresolved of that only way that is of absolute necessity to their safety ; They must have more time yet to consider of the matter, whether it be best for them to turn or no ? They stand at the very brink of Hell, and yet they must further consider of it, whether it be better to turn back or to go on ? Nay they will go on without Consideration ! And yet these men would take it haynously, if one should lay hands on them, and carry them to Bedlam ; or but tell them of the hundred part of the sottishnesthat they are guilty of.

5. And it is further considerable, that *these men that are all this while unresolved, about their Conversion and Sanctification,have wit enough to resolve of doubtfuller and less necessary matters, without any such advising or delays :* And they are men of ordinary parts and capacities for the matters of this world. They can eat when they are hungry, and drink when they are thirsty, without a twelve months time to advise first on it: They can resolve to go to bed at night,and to rise inthe morning, without a years,or a days deliberation. If they have any thing to buy or sell, they will not deliberate upon it till the market be past ; If they have their land to plow, or their corn to sow, or reap, or mow, they will take a twelve months time to pause upon it. They can quickly Resolve upon their every-days business, their travails, their labours, and all their ordinary affairs. And yet these *same men* cannot Resolve in seven years time, and seven to that, whether Heaven or Earth should

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be more loved and laboured for? Or whether a corruptable flesh, a wicked fancie, a greedy throat should be pleased before the God of Heaven, though the pleasing of it cost them the loss of their Salvation?

Why Sirs, a man that is well in his wits, would think that these matters should be more out of doubt then the former, and speedilier resolved on? One would think it should be an easier question, whether you should turn to God and a Holy life, for the saving of your immortal Souls? then whether you should eat, or drink, or sleep for the preservation of your bodies? For I can in many cases bring some reason that should perswade you to forbear eating, or drinking, or sleeping for a considerable time; but no man breathing can speak a word of reason (except mens folly should be called *Reason*,) that should perswade *you* to forbear your Conversion for a minute. And if you mistake about these *bodily* matters, the loss may be repaired, and at least in the world to come: but if you die before you are Resolved, and firmly Resolved to give up your Soul and Body to Christ, and live a Holy, Heavenly life, you are undone body and Soul for ever, and all the world can never save *you*.

Oh what a strange and horrible thing is it, that a man that hath the wit to manage his affairs as plausibly as any of his neighbours, that can overwit others in the matters of the world: that can govern Towns and Countries: that is learned in his Profession, in Law, in Physick, in Merchandize, in Navigation, or any the like: I say, that a Man of so deep a reach, so plodding and active a wit as this, should yet be unresolved, whether to be Sanctified or unsanctified: whether to be Holy and be Saved, or to be unholy, though God hath professed expressly, that such shall not see the face of God, *Heb.* 12. 14. These are our wise men, these are too many (besides the ignorant country men) of our Gentlemen, our Worshipful, and Honourable Men, our great Scholars, and men of noble or reverend esteem: that yet are unresolved

unresolved, whether to be saved or to be damned. Though God hath written a Bible to Resolve them, and a thousand Books are written to Resolve them: and Preachers are studying, and preaching to Resolve them: and a thousand mercies are cast into the scales, that one would think should help to turn them: and some sharp afflictions are helping to resolve them: and twenty, or forty years certain experience of the vanity of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and honour, and pleasure, and the unprofitableness of sin, one would think should Resolve them: yet after all this they are unresolved whether they should presently let go their sin, and whether God, or the flesh should be pleased or displeased? If this be the wisdom of these men, the Lord bless me, and all his chosen, from such widsom!

6. Nay consider further of *your unreasonable wickedness: Are not many of your Judgements Resolved, when yet your hearts and wills are unresolved.* I am confident, nay I am certain it is so. You are at once both *Resolved and unresolved.* What a confusion and war do you thus make in your own Souls? The Judgement is for one thing, and the Will and Affections are for another thing. What? are you not led by Reason? Will you let out your Affections, and lead your lives quite contrary to your knowledge? Would not most of you give it me as your Judgments under your hands, that its a thousand times better to cast away your drunkenness, your filthiness, your worldliness, and other known sins, then to keep them any longer? What say you? are you not Convinced that it were your wisest course to part with them this very day and hour? Undoubtedly many of you are. And yet for all this will you not Resolve to do it? Are you not perswaded in your Consciences, that its better to be in a Holy and Heavenly state then in a loose and careless worldly state? And that it were your safest, and wisest course to become New men, and lead a Holy Heavenly life without delay? Dare

you deny this? Is it not your Judgement? And yet will you not do it? Are you Resolved that it *should* be done, and *must* be done, and yet will you not Resolve to *do* it,? Why what this is but to be condemners of your selves? to carry a Judge about with you in your own breasts, that is still passing sentence against you? *Happy is he* (saith the Spirit of God, *Rom.* 14. 22.) *that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth.* If your Judgements be Resolved, let your wills Resolve, or else you are wilful adversaries of the light, and fight against Reason, and unman your selves, and sinning wilfully against your knowledge, shall be beaten with many stripes.

7. Methinks also it should somewhat quicken you to *Resolve*, when you consider *what a case you had now been in, if death had found you unresolved.* For if you are *unresolved* you are *unsanctified*; and if not Sanctified, you are not pardoned, or Justified, and therefore undoubtedly you had been past all help, in endless misery, if you had died all this while, before you were firmly Resolved for God. O what a dangerous ticklish condition have you stood in all this while? What wise man would live an hour in such a case for all the World, for fear lest that hour should be his last? And yet would you stay longer in it? and still are you unresolved?

8. Believe it, *Christ will not own you as his Servants, nor trust you what ever promises you may make him, as long as you are unresolved.* Who will take a servant that is not resolved to do any service? Who will take an unresolved person if he knows it, as a wife, or friend into his intimate love? And indeed you are not truly Christians till you are Resolved to take Christ for better and worse. What ever state is short of this, is also short of true Sanctification, and will fall short of Heaven. Christ is Resolved to stick to his servants, and he will have no servants that be not resolved to stick to him.

9. And indeed if *you be unresolved, as you are false-hearted at the first setting out, so it is certain that you will*

will never go well on, nor endure to the end in case of tryal, nor can you do the business of a Christians life without Resolution. If you will be Christs Disciples, you must reckon upon persecutions : *You must take up your Cross and follow him : You must be hated of all men for his sake and the Gospels : and you must prepare for prison, and fire, and sword. There's no hope of being saved while you purpose to save your pleasures, riches, liberties, or lives*, Matth. 16. 25. Mark 8. 35. Luke 9. 24. And will a man that is unresolved forsake his friends estate, and life, for the sake of Christ, and the hopes of Glory ? He cannot do it. I know that carnal ungrounded Resolution, may deceive a man in the day of tryal : when the self-suspecting, fearful Christian may hold out: But yet without an humble self-denying Resolution, joined with an adherence to Christ for strength, there's no man will hold out. *If thou be a wavering-minded man, thou wilt be unstedfast in all thy ways*, Jam. 1. 8. If thou be not Resolved, the words of a mans mouth will turn thee out of the way : the very mocks and scorns of a drunkard, or a fool that hath no understanding in the matters of Salvation, will make thee shrink, and hide thy profession, and be ashamed of Christ, in whom alone thou hast cause to Glory. If thou be not a resolved man, what better can be expected, but that thou turn as the weather-cock with every wind, and fit thy Religion to thy worldly ends, and as another *Judas*, sell thy Lord for a little money. If thou fall not away, it will be but for want of a tryal to procure it ; and therefore in Gods account thou art gone already ; because thy Resolution was never with him.

When you turn to God, there will remain within you the remnants of your corruption, a body of death, a rebelling flesh : and this will be still tempting you, and drawing you from God : And O how strong do these temptations seem to the Soul that is unresolved ? Yea without a firm habituate Resolution, it is impossible to overcome them. Your whole way to

Heaven is a continual warfare : You have enemies that will dispute every foot of the way with you. There's no going a step forward but as the ship doth in the Sea, by cutting its way through the waves, and billows ; and as the plow doth in the earth, by cutting through the resisting soil ; There is self which is your principal enemy, and there is Satan, and the world, and almost all that you meet with in it, will prove your hinderers; And you must make your way by valour, and Holy Violence through all ; And will an unresolved man do this ; You will scarce ever bow your knee to God in secret prayer, not set it your selves upon serious Meditations, but the flesh and the Devil will be drawing you off; You will never attempt a faithful reproof, a liberal work of Charity, a hazardous confession of Christ; or any dangerous or costly duty, but the flesh and the Devil will plead against it, and put you to it; And in these and many such cases of your lives, you will never break through, nor do any good on it, without Resolution. Do I deed to tell you how hard the way of Salvation is, that fly from it on mistake, because you think it harder then it is ? Do I need to tell you how false you will prove to Christ, if you have not Resolution, that know it by your ordinary, miserable experience, that a poor temptation will make you sin against your knowledge ? How many good wishes and purposes have you had already, in sickness, or at a lively Sermon, that are all come to nothing, for want of a firm Habituate Resolution ? What abundance of time-servers, and of Chaffie professours are lately fallen off, to the way of rising and riches in the world, or to the pride, and giddy levity of dividers, that oppose the Truth of God and their Teachers, and trouble the Church, and all because they were never well rooted by a sound Resolution ! They that take Christ but upon liking, do usually mislike him, when he calls them to self-denial. For they had never that connatural principle that should effectually dispose their Souls to like

like him: nor had they ever the inward experiences of power and sweetness, which are proper to the sincere, and should increase their liking of him. Either *Resolve* therefore, or stand by and perish.

10. I beseech you consider also, *what abundance of clear undeniable Reasons doth God give in to thee, to turn the Scales, and cause thee to Resolve.* He fetcheth Reasons from his own Dominion, and Soveraignty? Should not a creature obey the Lord that made him? He reasoneth with you from his daily preservations. Do you live upon him, and should you not obey him? He reasoneth with you from his Almightiness: You are all at his Mercy, and wholly in his hands; and yet dare you disobey him; He reasoneth with you from his Love and Goodness: Never did evil come from him: nor did he ever do any wrong; Never was there Man or Angel that was a loser by him; it is not possible to have so good a master, and yet will you not obey him? He fetcheth Reasons from all his Mercies: Every bit of bread is from him, and should be an Argument with thee to obey him: Every days health, and strength, and comforts; and every nights rest and ease; thy Mercies at home, and thy Mercies abroad, in private and in publick, all should be so many Arguments with thee to resolve. You cannot look upon a plant, or a flower under your feet, upon the Sun, or a Star that's over your heads, or upon any creature, but you may see so many Reasons that should move you to Resolve. If all these will not serve, he fetcheth yet stronger Reasons from the Incarnation, example, and blood of the Son of God: Canst thou look on God incarnate for sin, combating with Satan, and conquering for thee, and dying, and bleeding, and buried for thy sin, and yet be unresolved to leave that sin, and turn to him that hath bought thee by his blood? If all this will not serve, he Reasoneth with thee from thy own benefit. If thou care not for God, dost thou care for thy self? Dost thou regard thy own Soul? If thou do, its

high time to Resolve. He reasoneth with thee from Everlasting Glory. Is a certain Kingdom, an Everlasting, glorious Kingdom, nothing to thee? Art thou content to be thrust out of that Eternal Inheritance? Is the filthy pleasure of the flesh for a few hours, better than the endless joys of the Saints? He pleads also with thee from the danger that thou art near. Poor Soul, thou little seest what others see, that are dead before thee. Thou little knowest what they feel that died before they were Resolv'd for God. He fetcheth his Reasons from the certain, everlasting flames of Hell: and is there not force enough in these for to Resolve thee? Good Lord, what a thing is a senseless sinner? Dost thou believe Heaven and Hell as thou takest on thee to do? If thou do believe them, is it possible for thee believingly to think of Heaven, and its Eternal Glory, and yet to be unresolved whether to turn or not? Or canst thou think of the endless miseries of the damned, and yet be unresolved whether to turn or not? Can any heart be so senseless or deluded?

Moreover he pleadeth with thee from the equity and sweetness of his Service. It is but to Love him, and to seek his Kingdom, and forbear those things that hurt thy Soul. His Commands are not unreasonable nor grievous. Darest thou speak out and say that sin is better, and that Satan hath provided thee a better work then God hath done? He reasoneth with thee also from his Wisdom and his Justice. He tells thee that as Satan hath nothing to do with thee, and as he is none of thy friends, and meaneth thee not so well as God doth: so he is not able to prescribe thee a more just and perfect Law then God hath done. Follow God and thou art sure thou shalt never be deceived or misled. For he wanteth not Wisdom, or Power, or Goodness to be a meet Law-giver and Guide. But if thou follow the Devil, the World, or the Flesh, thou followest a blind and a deceitful Guide. And yet after all these Reasons art thou not Resolved?

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He Reasoneth with thee also from thy own experience: What good hath sin done thee? And what hurt would Holiness do thee? Yea he reasons with thee from the experience of all the world: *Who was ever the better for sinning? And who was ever the worse for Holiness? How long will thy fleshly delights endure? What will this do for thee in thy extremity? Was ever man made happy by it? Thou knowest well enough thou must shortly leave it: and that it will forsake thee in thy greatest need: But so would not God, if thou hadst Resolvedly given up thy self to him. All men that refuse a Heavenly life, do sooner or later, wish that they had chosen it.*

Abundance of such Reasonings God useth with thee in his Word, and by his Ministers: and dost thou think indeed that there is not weight enough in these to give thee cause immediately to Resolve? How little or nothing canst thou say against them? Canst thou bring any Reason, that is Reason indeed, against these or any of these Reasons of the Lord? Darest thou say that ever one of them is false, or insufficient? and what are the Reasons which you have on the contrary to hinder you from Resolving? forsooth, because your sins are sweet, you would fain have the pleasure of them a little longer yet: O wretched Souls! that find more pleasure in the abusing of your Maker and Redeemer, then in loving, honouring, and pleasing him: That delight more in serving the flesh and the Devil than in serving God and seeking after his Favour and your own Salvation. You are a hundred times madder then a man that lyeth tumbling himself in his dung, and will not rise out of it to receive a Kingdom, because it is so soft and so sweet that he is loth yet to leave it, You are foolisher then *Nebuchadnezzar* had been, if he had been loth to return again to his Kingdom, because he would fain stay longer among the beasts of the field, among whom in his distraction he had betaken himself, *Dan.* 4. 31, 32, 33. And what other Reasons have you against Resolving?

Forsooth you shall be mockt or jested at by others; By whom I pray you? Not a man but a miserable fool will do it. Yea but you are told you must forsake all, and be ready to die for Christ, if he call you to it. Very true! and can you keep that which he calleth you to forsake? How long will you keep it? Silly Souls! do you not know that you forsake it by not forsaking it, and lose all, by saving any thing? and that you have no way to save it but by losing and forsaking it. Suppose you were by enemies banished out of *England*, and upon pain of death you must be gone within a twelvemonth: And a King that loveth you inviteth you to his Country, and tells you for the poor livings that you have lost, he will make you Lords and Princes, so you will bring with you the little goods you have, and leave nothing behind you. Hereupon one man takes the next wind, and ships over all his riches, that he may have it when he comes there: Another saith, I am loth to leave my goods; I have a while longer to stay here, and what shall I do without them? I am loth to see the habitation of my Ancestors impoverished: And so when his time is expired, he is fain to leave them all behind him, and hath none that will receive him in the Country where he must abide. Which of these think you is the wiser man? Which of them was it that lost his goods, and which did save them? I speak to you but such another parable as Christ used to *you* himself, *Luke* 16. 2, 3, 4, 9. where you are advised to send your riches before you; and to make you friends of the *mammon* of unrighteousness, that when *you* die *you* may be received into the everlasting habitations.

I know there are other vain delusions that hinder you from Resolving: I will not call them Reasons; for they are unreasonable. I shall only say this to you, that if there be ever a man of *you* that heareth his words, that dare be such a Blasphemer, as to reproach the Laws and Image of his maker, and say that he hath made *you* too strict a Law, and

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laid too heavy a task upon *you*, and a Heavenly life is troublesome and unnecessary: If there be a man of *you*, that is so deviliſh, as that you dare plead the Devils cause, and justifie his work before the Lords, and say that it is better to please the flesh; let that man prepare himself to make good these words before the Lord, and his Holy Angels; and be sure that he shall be there put to it in another manner, then he is here by me: and if you have such Reasons as you will stand to before the Bar of God, to prove the Devil the better Master, and an unholy life to be better then a Heavenly; see then that you look them up, and there make your best of them; and expect to live with the Master that you served, and to reap as you sowed, and eat the fruit of your fleshly ways, which you took to be the best. But if you have no such Reasons, but your Consciences are convinced that God should be served, and sin should be speedily forsaken, and Heaven should be provided for above all; *Resolve* then to do it before you stir: Or else say plainly, *I have no Reason to be wicked, but because I will be wicked: I will forsake God, and damn my own Soul without any Reason, because I will do it.* And if you are at this pass, you may take your course.

11. Another thing that I would intreat you to consider of is this; *It is a most base and treacherous abuse of God, to make any question of this which you are so long unresolved of.* I confess, when a blind mind hath raised such a question, it is lawful for a reasonable man to answer it. But in him that makes a doubt of such a thing, as its a shame to himself; so it is a hainous indignity to God. If you had a chast and modest woman to your Wife, I think she would take it for an injury, if you should but make a question of it, whether she or a common whore be the honester woman; If your wife or children should bring before you a Hobby-horse or an Ass, and make a great question of it, whether you or the Ass be the comlier, or the wiser; How would you take this

of them? if you should bring an idiot or a mad man before your Prince, and make a question whether he or they be the wiser man: or if you set a Rebel before him, and make a question which of them hath the better title to the Crown; what entertainment might you expect? I tell you it is ten thousand thousand times a baser affront and wrong to God, to set the pleasure of sin before him, and make a question which of them is the better; and to set your riches, and your sports, and your drunkenness and gluttony, and your whoredom, and your revenge, in competition with your Redeemer, and everlasting Glory, and to make a question which of them is to be preferred. To make once a question whether God or flesh should be pleased: whether Christ or the world should be loved, and followed; Whether the Holy Ghost or the Devil should dwell in us? Whether the Saints of God, or the servants of the Devil should be our chosen company? Whether the Word and Ministers of Christ, or the examples and words of wicked men, should more prevail with us? Whether Heaven or Earth should be more carfully sought after? Whether a Holy, or a careless, wicked life be more to be desired? Or whether it be better to turn to God, or not? I say, to make such a question as this, or one of these, is little better then to put a scorn upon the God of Heaven? and savoureth of such malice as is more like a Devil then a reasonable man; or else of such folly, as is below the Devil, and as none of *you* would be guilty of in the matters of this world: If one should but make a comparison between you and some deformed monster, or between your house and a swinestie, though he gave you the better, I think you would take it as a scorn, that he should make such a comparison or question? Much more may God so take it, when *you* make a question betwixt sin and him. There is *but one* Infinite, unconceivable, perfect Good:

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and shall he be abased by such a question? There is *but one* thing that is contrary to God in all the world, that is worse then the Devil himself, and that is sin: and shall this be put in question or comparison with God? There is but *One* that hath Loved us to the death, with a matchless unconceivable saving Love, and that is Jesus Christ: And there is but one thing that is a deadly enemy to us and him, and that would damn us, when he is endeavouring to save us: and that is sin: And must there be a question or comparison between these? There is *One* Sanctifying Spirit, that would cleanse, and heal, and save us; And there is a malicious spirit that would deceive us, defile us, and destroy us: And must there be any question or comparison made between these? There is *but one* Eternal Happiness, and *One* Holy way to it: and there is but *One* everlasting misery, and a fleshly, filthy, sinful way to it: And must there be made any question which of these should be preferred? Consider I beseech you what you do: And if it be so vile a thing to make any question of it, what is it then to be still unresolved? Yea and to choose the worser part, and stick to it in your heart and life?

12. Consider also that *Present Resolution would put an end to a great many fruitless, troublesome deliberations and delays.* If a man had but a weighty business of the world upon his hand, that his estate or life lieth on, it is a perplexity to him as long as he is unresolved what course he shall take: It will be troubleing him when he should rest, and break his sleep: it will fill him with musings, and disturb and distract his mind, and even make him Melancholly. And how can it choose but be a troublesome distracting thing to your mind, to be unresolved what course to take for your Everlasting state? I know some hearts are so desperately hardened and past feeling, (*Ephes.* 4. 19.) and some mens Consciences so seared as with a hot iron, (1 *Tim.* 4. 2.) that they can throw away all thoughts of Resolution, and never be much-

much troubled: But I hope that many are not so desperate: It is not thus with all that are unconverted. How long have some of your minds been troubled whether to turn or not? Resolve man, if thou love thy Soul, and put an end to such troubles.

13. Consider also, that *Resolving will put an end to a great many of troublesome Temptations that do assault you, and will break the heart of Satans hopes.* As long as you are unresolved, he hath still possession of you, and is still in hopes to keep possession. And as long as he hath any hope, he will never give over, but will be repairing his Garrison, and making up all the breaches that the Ordinances of God had made. When one temptation takes not, he will be offering you another, and will be following and disquieting you day and night: But If once he see you firmly *Resolved*, his hopes will fail him, and you may be much freer from his temptations then you were before. I do not say he will give over; For even when you are broken away from him, he will make after you again. But it is a greater advantage to you to fight against him in the open field, under such a Captain as Jesus Christ, that will assure you of the victory, then to be in his own prison with his fetters on you heels. You know the way to be troubled with an unwelcome suiter, is to delay your answer, and take time to consider of it: and the way to be eased of him, is to give him a peremptory Resolute answer. And when he seeth you Resolved, he will cease.

14. Moreover, till *you are Resolved of your Conversion, you cannot Rationally Resolve of any one word or action of your lives*: Nay till then they are all misemployed to their hurt. For no man can Resolve of the *Means* till he is resolved of the End. You must Resolve whether to go, before you can Resolve which way to go. Before Conversion mens end is wrong; their intention and business is to please the flesh, and all their thoughts, and words and actions, that have such an End, are wicked and pernicious. Till you are Resolved by Conversion to be

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for God, you have never never a right End (in a prevailing sence:) and therefore you cannot order one thought, nor word, nor deed aright. I tell you every thought, you think, and every word you speak, and every deed you do, while you are unconverted, are so *many* steps towards Hell, except *only* those that tend towards Conversion, and some way further it. Resolve therefore of this, or *you* can Resolve of nothing.

15. Moreover, if *you would presently and firmly Resolve, you would ease your friends and the Ministers of Christ of much of their sorrows, and fears, and cares for you: and of much of the most troublesome part of their work.* As long as you are unconverted, they can look on *you* but as the heirs of Hell, that will be quickly in those torments, if conversion prevent it not; and therefore their hearts are full of sorrow for *you*, when *you* sorrow not for *your* selves: and their care is how they might prevent *your* damnation, which they know without Conversion can never be done. Many a groan doth *your Misery* cost them, and many a thought have *they* of *your* danger, which *you* are not aware of. O what a grief is it to believing Ministers, to see so many of their people in the power of Satan, and the high-way to Hell, after all their care and labour for their recovery? We cannot *say* that the unconverted shall certainly perish, because we have *yet* hopes that *they may* be Converted, tho' *they* be not: But we know that if *they* die in the case that *they* are in, there is no hope of them at all: and we know they are uncertain to live an hour: And therefore as long as they are in this Condition, how can we chuse but be filled with fear, and grief, and care for them? All the troubles that befal a faithful Minister, in his worldly affairs, by crosses and persecutions, are nothing to the trouble that your sin and misery bringeth to their minds. O what a comfortable life were it for a Minister to live with bread and water among a people that would obey the Gospel, and give us hopes that we should live with them in Heaven! O how cheerfully may we study

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for them and preach to them, when we see that it is not lost upon them ? How willingly should we prepare them the bread of life, when we see they feed and live upon it ! How joyfully may we pray and praise God with them, when we think how they must joyn with us in the Celestial Praises ? O Sirs, I beseech you grudge not your Ministers this comfort ; Do not destroy your selves to grieve and trouble them. O put them once out of their fears and grief for you, by your *Resolving, and speedy return to God :* That they that have many a time thought in their heart, *I am afraid this poor sinner will never be recovered, I am afraid he will be a firebrand in Hell :* may now rejoyce with you when they see you coming home, and may meet you as the Father himself doth doth meet his prodigal children, and weep over you for joy, as they were wont to do in sorrow. You would ease our hearts of abundance of sad thoughts, if we could but perceive you once Resolved, and see you come home. Now you think our preaching harsh to you, because we tell you so much of sin and damnation : and you think our discipline more harsh, when we refuse to have communion with you. But if you would once Resolve and Turn, how gladly should we open our doors and our hearts to you : and how gladly should we turn the stream of our preaching, and tell you of nothing but Christ, and Heaven, and peace, and comfort, further then your own necessities should require it ? What say you Sirs to this reasonable request ? Will you resolve without any more ado, and ease us of our grief and fears, and give us but leave to preach more comfortable Doctrine to you ?

16. Moreover consider, that *you have much work to do when you are Resolved and Converted, and a great way to go when you have begun your journey towards Heaven: and till you are Resolved, none of this can be done.* You can go no further, till Conversion have set you in the right way. Till then, the further you go, the further you are out of the way. Will you be unresolved till

till the night come on? Shall all the rest of your work be undone? Will you begin your race when you should be at the end? Alas you should be able to say as *Paul*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. *I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: henceforth is laid up for me a Crown of righteousness:* when as you cannot yet say, *I have begun my course: I am set in the right way.*

17. Consider also that *Resolution maketh works easie and successful.* The *resolute* Army is seldom conquered. A resolute travailer will go through with his journey, and it is easier to himself: His spirits are excited; and doing it with vivacity, he findeth less trouble in it. A slow and lazy pace doth sometime soonest weary us. A slow motion is most easily stopt, when a swift one bears down that which would resist it. A man that Resolvedly sets himself to the Work of God, and is past any further deliberating of the matter, and is at a point with all the world, will make a pleasure of that which will stop and stall an unresolved professour. Resolve therefore for your own success and ease.

I tell you, by Resolving it is that you must conquer, and by conquering, you must obtain the Crown. The unresolved are wavering at every assault, like cowardly soldiers, even ready to run before they fight. They will not be at the cost or labour: they are soon weary: They cannot say Nay to an old Companion, or a tempting bait. But the Resolved breaks through all, and treads that under his feet as dirt which another sells his Soul for. If he meet with reproaches and scorns from men, he remembreth that Christ foretold him this, and suffered much more of the like before him. If his friends turn enemies for the Gospel sake, he saith, *I was told of this before, even that I must be hated of all men for Christ.* If he be tied by lewd and wanton company, he saith as *David*, Psal. 119. 115. *Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the Commandments of my God.* If he be tempted with rewards and honours in the world, he will not stand wavering and longing after it, as *Balaam*;

Isaam; but he will say as the same *Balaam* was forced to do: *If you will give me a house full of Gold and Silver, I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord.* And *let their money perish with them, that think all the Gold in the world, worth the peace of a good Conscience and the favour of God.* If he be threatened by men, to move him to forsake his duty, he saith, *Whether it be better to obey God or man, judge ye?* If he hear seducers he is rooted in the Spirit, and the infallible Word, and is not shaken by every wind. If he see never so many fall off by backsliding, he saith, *It was not only for their company that I chose the holy way: God is still the same: and Heaven is the same: and Scripture is the same, and therefore I am Resolved to be the same.* If God afflict him by poverty, sickness, or other tryals, he saith, *I did not become a Christian to scape affliction, but to scape damnation! If he kill me, yet will I trust in him: Shall I receive good at the hands of God, and not evil? Naked came I out of my mothers womb, and naked must I return to dust; the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away: blessed be his name.* If oppressing enemies insult over him, he can say as *Mic.* 7. 8, 9. *Rejoyce not against me O mine enemy when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light to me: I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute Judgement for me: he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his Righteousness.* If the wicked cast in his teeth his profession, and the name of his God, he *rejoyceth that he is counted worthy to suffer for that Name*, and yet he *will hope to see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living.* And if he must go to Heaven through poverty, and a mean estate, he hath *learned to want, as well as to abound, and in what estate soever he be, therewith to be contented.* And so in the work of Conversion it self, for want of Resolution, many stick long in the birth, and they are hanging so long between Heaven and Hell, that its a wonder of Mercy that God doth not cut them off and let them

perish

perish. But the well Resolved Soul doth deal more faithfully with the light that is revealed to him, and doth not stand struggling so long against it, nor hold Christ and his Spirit so long in hand; but is glad to make sure work in so great a business, and take so good a match while it is offered: And being engaged once, he *is firm as Mount Zion, that cannot be moved. Resolve* therefore that your work may be the more easy, and successful; and conquer by Resolving.

18. *I suppose you dare not resolve against Conversion, and a Heavenly life! And why then will you not Resolve for it?* What purpose you to do for the time to come? Is it your Resolution to live and die as you are? Have you not purposes in your mind to Repent hereafter? Dare you say, I am Resolved never to be Converted? Some may be so desperate; but I think it is but few even of the ungodly. Why this shews that there is a secret conviction in your Consciences: O do not stifle it: Neutrality never saved Soul. Seeing you dare not Resolve against it, Resolve for it.

19. Consider I beseech you, *how much it doth concern your selves, to have this question well and speedily Resolved.* God asketh you, whether you will be Converted and Sanctified or not? Resolve this question, and you Resolve your selves of a great many more that depend upon it. The answer to this, must be the answer to the Rest. If the question were, *whether you will be pardoned or no? Whether you will live in Heaven or Hell for ever?* Whether you will dwell with God and Angels, or with Devils? you would not be long in answering this. You would resolve without an hours delay. Why? *this is the question* Sirs, but the answer to it, must be the answer to the first question: For without Sanctification, there is no Salvation: If you will not be Converted, you shall be condemned whether you will or no: For God hath resolved of this already, and there is no resisting the Resolution of God. The true state of the question is, *whether you will Turn, or burn:* choose you whether; for it must be one. O therefore if you

you will but Resolve Christ and us this one question, that you will be Converted, Christ will Resolve you the principal questions, that concern you in the world, even whether you shall be pardoned or saved, and where and with whom, you must live for ever.

20. Lastly consider, that *if you stay till you receive the sentence of death, its two to one but that will force you to Resolve. But a forced Resolution will not serve turn* : and then it will be very hard for you to discern whether it be any better then meerly from your fears. You put off all till sickness come, and you see once that you must die ; there's no remedy ; and then you will cry, *O if the Lord would but recover me, and try me once again with life, I would delay no longer, but I would become a new man, and live a Holy and Heavenly life; I am resolved of it by the Grace of God* Yea ; but who knows whether these last Resolutions be sincere? We hear abundance speak this in their Sickness, that never turn when they come to Health, but forget all, and live in a manner as they did before. Is it not most likely to be only the fear of death that makes you take up these Resolutions ? If it be so, they will never save you if you die, nor hold you to your promises if you live ; For it is not bare fear that is true Conversion ; but its a changed heart, that is fallen in Love with God and Holiness, and into a setled hatred of former sins. No late Repentance and Resolutions but these, will be any thing worth, as to the saving of your Souls : And therefore if you should have true Resolutions at the last (which is too rare) you cannot choose but be much in doubt of them, when you find so much of fear upon your Spirit, and consider that you never would Resolve till then. And therefore if you would have a Comfortable change, Resolve now in your prosperity, before the face of death affright you to it, and those fears and the lateness do make you question the truth and soundness of it, and so deprive you of the comfort which you have so much need of at a dying hour.

And

And thus I have given you twenty Considerations to perswade you, if it may be, presently to Resolve. I am sure there is truth, and reason, and weight in them; but what good they will do you, I am not sure, because I know not how you will receive them.

IV. And now I come to the last part of my task; which is to direct you how to perform the work that I have perswaded you to. But because it is meerly the *Determination of the Will*, it is *perswasion* that must do more to the work then *Direction*. And therefore I shall only desire *you* to look back upon the qualifications of sound Resolution, which I before laid down to you, and then take heed of the hindrances in your way, and to set *your* selves to do your duty.

Remember that I before told you, that it is not a holy, saving Resolution, unless it be 1. *Entire* for the matter of it, comprehending all that is Essential to Christianity: 2. And unless you Resolve upon *present* obedience without delay: 3. And also unless it be *Absolute* and peremptory, taking Christ for better and worse without any reserve: 4. And unless it be *well grounded*: 5. And unless it be *built on the strength of Christ*, and not only a carnal confidence of your own: 6. And unless it be *habitual and firm*, and become your ordinary frame and byas, and as it were the new Nature, and inclination of your Souls. By this much you see already, what manner of Resolution it is that you must have.

The next thing is, to advise you of the hinderances that you may avoid them. 1. The principal hinderance of Resolution is *Secret unbelief*; when Everlasting life is taken but as an uncertainty, or men have no more but a slight Opinion of it. The Cure of this disease, I have often, and a little before delivered you.

2. Ano-

2. Another thing that hindereth Resolution is *Inconsiderateness*, of which also I have spoken purposely before.

3. Another hinderance is a *sleepy Insensibility*, when the heart is hardened, and men are past feeling. We cannot tell how to awaken these men to be sensible of the things that should move them to Resolve. Of this also I have spoken by it self.

4. Another great hindrance is the *natural strangeness and averseness* of the mind of corrupted man, to these high and Spiritual things. So that we drive men by all our Arguments against the byas of their sinful habits. And those habits plead against us more forcibly without a word of reason, then all the reason in the world could do. See therefore that you keep under changing means till your hearts be changed: And the perusing of such weighty Arguments as we offer you, may be of use to the changing of your hearts: For God useth to work on the Will by the Understanding: And therefore Light hath an aptitude to change the Will it self.

5. Moreover, *the rooted Interest of this world*, doth much hinder men from Resolving to turn: Its always drawing them another way, or putting objections and cavils into their minds; and if they will needs Resolve, it is this that secretly enticeth them to reserves, and to resign themselves to God but with conditions and exceptions; and so makes them Hypocrites when they think themselves Converts; and cheats them with a half deceitful Resolution, instead of one that is absolute and firm. Against this impediment also I have spoken before.

6. Another hinderance is, *The nearness of fleshly enticing objects*. When the Covetous man *seeth* his houses and lands, his goods and money, the very sight of them breaks the heart of all his better Resolutions. The drunkard seems to be Resolved till he *sees* the cup, and then his Resolution is broken. The Whoremonger seemeth to be Resolved, till the bait is brought

brought *neer* him, and then he goes as an Ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks. Certainly if these Resolutions were sound, they would either cause men to fly from the bait, and not come near it, or else to refuse it when it is presented them: In the course of their lives their Resolution would govern them, if they were sincere.

7. And Satan himself will do all that he can to hinder you when he sees you ready to Resolve. He knows that he must bestir him now or never. You never put him to it indeed till you are Resolving to forsake him. One block or other he will be sure then to cast in your way; Either he tells you, it is but folly and melancholy to trouble your self with these matters: or that you may be saved without all this ado: or that God is more merciful then to cast away all that be not Sanctified: or that Godliness doth but trouble and distract People: and that the professours of it are secretly no better then others; and that it is but Hypocrisie for them to make such a stir with their Religion: and that we must be moderate in our Godliness, and take heed of being Godly over much: A hundred such fooliish suggestions as these, the Devil hath at hand to cast in your way, when he seeth you ready to Resolve.

If these will not serve, he will set some of his wicked Disciples on railing or deriding you! And perhaps some cunning fool a cavelling with you, to see if they can overwit you, and draw you back.

If that will not do, perhaps he will open the falls of professors to you, and labour to perswade you that *all are such*; Or he will shew you what divisions and differences are among them: or he will take advantage of some difficulties in Religion, or some controversies in which he sees *you* already engagd to a party: or he will tell you of some false doctrine that some forward professors may be tainted with, to make them,

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and consequently Godliness it self more odious, or at least suspected to you. If all this will not do, he will endeavour to set your very parents, or natural kindred against you, that those that should most promote your Salvation, and on whom your livelyhood much dependeth shall become your enemies, and hate you for offering to give up your selves to Christ: If that will not do, he will endeavour to entice you with the baits of fleshly pleasure, or of preferments, or much business, or merry company, or some great matters that you may hope for in the world. And usually this snare is the strongest of all. Or else he will tell you that if needs he will Resolve, it is time enough hereafter: You may yet take more of your pleasure or commodity before you leave it: Yet you may suck the breasts of the world a little dryer, and then turn to God and cast it off. If all this will not prevail with you, he will tell you it is now too late; you have sinned so long, or such hanious sins that God will not have mercy on you: he will make you believe that God hath utterly forsaken you, and there is no remedy: and you may as well spare your thoughts of Turning now, for Christ will not receive or welcome you: and therefore it is even as good go on, and take up the rest that the world can afford *you*, for there is no hope of better. But the most desperate temptation of all the rest, is, to put some blasphemeous, unbelieving thoughts into your mind: especially if you fall into company with Infidels, that will draw you to question the Word of God, and the Immortality of the Soul, and the truth of Christianity, or the life to come, whether there be any such things or not: Where these once take, and are received with approbation, the Soul is in a miserable case: Though I know many tempted, melancholy Christians, are haunted with such temptations, who yet abhor them and do well at last, for all this. Sometimes also when he cannot take you off from Resolving, he will lead you among some disputing *Opinionists*, and

and they shall tice you to take up with their Opinionative Religiousness, instead of true Sanctification, of which I have spoke in the eighth Direction. By these and many such wiles as these, doth the old serpent do all that possibly he can, to hinder you from sound Resolution, and Conversion. And therefore you must be armed against his temptations, and meet them with abhorrence: and if you feel them too hard for you, go daily to Christ by Faith and Prayer for renewed strength: and call to your faithful friends, and Ministers for help. Open your case to some one that's able, experienced, and faithful; that he may help you with Arguments to resist those temptations which you know not how your selves to deal with. God hath appointed Pastors in his Church to be Spiritual Fathers in the Lord; and when they have sowed in you the Seed of eternal life, they watch over it till they see the blade and fruit: They travail as in birth of you, till Christ be formed in you. It is their office to help you; and God giveth to them that are faithful, abilities and affections agreeable to their office. And therefore lean upon the hand of your faithful guides, and think not to break through temptations alone, and get to Heaven without the means that God hath appointed you.

Having told you the Hinderances, and what to do against them, I shall add but these two words more of *Direction.* 1. *When you are Resolving, give up your selves to God with a Holy Covenant or Vow.* I mean not any *rash vow*, nor any *unnecessary vow*; but the same that you made in *Baptism*, which your age it self doth call you to renew, but your sins against it do call you more.

Perhaps you'l say, that you are not able to perform it by your own strength, and you are uncertain of Gods assistance, and therefore how can you promise or vow?

To

To this I answer: 1. You may be sure that this Objection is frivolous, because it makes against the frequent, express Commands of God, the practice of his Church in all ages, and the nature of Christianity it self: God hath in all Ages been pleased to receive men into his service and Church in a Covenant way; and *Baptism* it self is our solemn Covenanting with him: and the *Lords Supper* is appointed for a solemn renewing of it. And indeed it is implicitly and virtually renewed by a true Christian every day of his life. In every duty he gives up himself to God: And if he should cease this Heart covenant, he would cease to be a Christian: for the very essence of his Christianity consisteth in it. It is his Faith it self.

2. And when you covenant for the time to come, you do not take on you to *foretel* infallibly your own preseverance; but you profess your present consent to be Christ's, and to continue his, and engage your selves thereto. And should you not choose the strictest engagements? 1. Where there is the greatest need of them, because of the loosness of the heart, and the strength of temptations, that would draw us away; and 2. Where there is the most absolute necessity, because if we miscarry we are undone: 3. And where you are already obliged by Gods Commands whether you vow or not: 4. And where God hath made you consent to the Obligation of necessity to Salvation. He that intends to keep Covenant, and knows that he must keep it or be condemned, hath little reason to be loath to make it.

3. And for Gods assistance, you have much more cause to expect in it the way of Covenanting, which himself hath appointed you, then in the neglect of his appointed means.

Object. *But if I did it in Baptism, what need I do it again?*

Answ.

Answ. I told you the Covenant must be continued and renewed through the whole course of our lives, but especially after a notorious violation of your former promise: You once gave up your selves to God, and you have proved false to him, and it is a wonder of Mercy that ever he will trust you more, or enter any more into Covenant with you: and will you draw back from such Mercy, and such a duty as this?

Object. But I am afraid of breaking my vows again, and it is better to forbear them, than not to perform them.

Answ. 1. This Reason makes as much against the inward Vow and Resolution of the heart: so that by this rule you would never be Christians, for fear of falling away, and being worse. 2. There is an absolute necessity of your Resolving, and Covenanting, and of Keeping your Resolutions and Covenants: And when it must be kept, or you are utterly undone; its but a madness to refuse to make the Covenant for fear of breaking it: For this is but to make choice of an easier place in Hell, for fear of having a worse, if you should resolve for Heaven: When as Heaven is set open before you, and you thus wilfully cast away your Hopes. Nay your place in Hell is not like to be the easier, when you thus deliberately, and wilfully refuse the Covenant. 3. Your Resolutions and Holy Vows, are means of Gods appointment to keep you from breaking his imposed Covenant. Is not a Resolved, Engaged, Devoted Christian liker to be accepted, and to persevere, then a waverer, that saith, I dare not vow, for fear least I perform not.

In unnecessary matters I had rather you were too backward to vow. Some will vow poverty, and some a single life, and some will vow that they will never drink wine or strong drink more: such vows as these may be good for some, in cases of special necessity, as the last remedies of a dangerous

diſeaſe; but they are not for all, nor raſhly to be made. But the Reſolution and Vow of cleaving unto God in Faith and Holy Obedience, and of Renouncing the Fleſh, or the World, and the Devil; this is for all, and muſt be made and kept by all that will be ſaved.

2. Direct. And as I would have you ſecond your Reſolution by a Covenant with God, ſo I would adviſe you (ordinarily) to go further, and *openly Profeſs the Reſolution and Covenant that you have made.* For as *with the heart men believe unto Righteouſneſs, ſo with the mouth Confeſſion is made unto Salvation,* Rom. 10. 10. Chriſt will confeſs thoſe that confeſs him, and diſown, and be aſhamed of thoſe that are aſhamed of him. When you have eſcaped the greateſt miſery in the world, and obtained the greateſt Mercy in the world, the greatneſs of it calleth you to acknowledge it, and give Glory to God. Go to your old Companions in ſin, and tell them what God hath revealed to you and done for you! Tell them, *O Sirs, I ſee now that which I never ſaw before: I wonder how I could venter ſo madly upon ſin! and how I could make a light of God, of Chriſt, of Death, of Judgement, and Everlaſting life! I have been hitherto your Companion in ſin, but I would not take the ſame courſe again for all the world: I ſee now there is a better portion hereafter to be obtained, which I was mindleſs of: I ſee now we are all this while making merry at the brink of Hell, and there was but a ſtep between us and death: Now I ſee, that the courſe that we have taken is wicked and deceitful, and will not ſerve turn: If I ſerve the fleſh, it will reward me but with rottenneſs: I will therefore hereafter ſerve that God, that will certainly reward me with Everlaſting life. I beſeech you Sirs, come away with me, and ſee and try what I have ſeen and tryed: I have lived with you in ſin, O now let us joyn together in Repentance, and a Holy life: I ſhall be glad of your company to Heaven: but if you will*

will not do it, take your course: For my part I am Resolved; by the Grace of God, I am fully Resolved to be from this day forward a New man, and never to joyn with you more in a fleshly and ungodly life. Never tempt me nor perswade me to it: for I am Resolved.

Thus if you will declare your Resolution to others, and seek to win them, you may possibly do them good: but however you will be the deeper engaged to God your selves.

Yea, though I would have no ostentation of Conversion, nothing done *rashly in publick*, nor *without the advice of a faithful Minister before hand*: yet *with these Cautions*, I must say, that it is a shame that we hear no more in publick, of the Conversion of sinners. As Baptism is to be in publick, that the Congregation may witness your engagement, and pray for you, and rejoyce at the receiving of a member: So the solemn renewing of the same Covenant by Repentance after a wicked life, should ordinarily be in publick, to give warning to others to avoid the sin, and to give God the honour, and to have the Prayers of the Church, and to satisfie them of our Repentance, that they may have Communion with us. The Papists do more offend (of the two) in so much confining Confession and Penitence, to the Priests ear in secret, and not bringing it before the Church, then they do in making a Sacrament of it. I wonder that People should every day thrust into our hands their requests to pray for them when they are sick, and that it is so rare a matter to have any desire our Prayers, for the pardon of all the sins of their natural, unconverted state.

I would here seriously advise all those that it concerneth, that when God hath shewed them so great a Mercy as to Convert them, and make them New Creatures, they would go to their faithful Minister, and by his advice, put up such a bill as this, *Such a man of this Parish, having long lived in blindness, and*

deadness, ungodliness, (and name the particular sins, if they were publickly known,) and being by the great Mercy of God convinced of his sin and misery, and sustained with some holes of Mercy by the Blood and Merits of Jesus Christ, and being now Resolved by the Grace of God, to forsake this fleshly, worldly life, and to give up himself to Christ and Holiness, doth earnestly intreat the Church to pray for him, that his many, and hainous sins may be all forgiven, and that God would again receive him into Mercy, and that he may hold on in Faith and Holiness to the last, and never turn again to the course of his iniquity.

And if the Minister think it meet, refuse not to make your selves an open Confession of your former life of sin and misery, and to profess openly your Resolution to walk with God for the time to come.

This course should be more ordinary with us: and if Conversion it self were not so rare, or else so defective, that it doth too little quicken men to a sence of duty, and sin, and Mercy, or so doubtful, and by slow degrees, that it is scarce discerned by many that have it; were it not for some of these; more ordinary would it be, to the great rejoycing and benefit of the Church.

The Conclusion. And now I have given you Directions in the most great and necessary business in this world: They are such as I received of God, and if Faithfully practised, will put your Salvation past all hazard. But what they have done or what they will do, I cannot tell; but must leave the issue to God and you. Its pity eternal Glory should be lost, for want of yielding to so holy, and sweet, and reasonable a course. It is lamentable to observe, what ignorant, base, unworthy thoughts the most have of the very Office of the holy Ghost, who is the sanctifier of all that God will save. The very *name* of *Regeneration and Sanctification* is not understood by some, and is but matter of derision to others: and the most think that it is another

ther kind of matter then indeed it is. To be baptized, and come to Church, and to say some cold and heartless Prayers, and to forbear some grosse disgraceful sins, is all the sanctification that most are acquainted with: (and all have not this:) And thus they debase the work of the holy Ghost. If a Prince have built a sumptuous Pallace, and you will shew men a Swine stie, and say [*This is the Palace that the Prince hath been so long a building*] were not this to abuse him by contempt? If he build a Navy, and you shew a man two or three pig-troughs, and say [*These are the Kings ships*] would he not take it for a scorn? Take of such dealing with the Holy Ghost. Remember what it is to believe in the name of the Father, *Son*, and holy Ghost: and remember that you were Baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost: And do you not yet know why? nor know the meaning of your Baptismal Covenant? It is not only to believe that there are three Persons in the Trinity, but to consent to the Relations and duty to them, in respect to their several Relations and work. If the Father had not Created you, how could you have been men? The Lord of nature must be acknowledged as the *End* and the governour of nature, and accordingly obeyed. And this is to believe and be baptized into the Name of God the Father. If the Son had not Redeemed you, you had been as the Devils were, forsaken and given over to dispair. The Purchaser, Procurer, and Author of Grace, of Pardon, and Salvation must be acknowledged to be such, and himself and his Salvation accordingly accepted, and his terms submitted to. And this is to believe in the name of the Son, and in Baptism we make profession hereof. And certainly the work of the holy Ghost is as necessary to your Salvation. Without the sanctifying work of the Spirit, you could never be delivered from sin and Satan, nor restored to Gods Image, and consequently could never be the Members of Christ, nor have any saving benefit by

his sufferings. Would you not think him unworthy to live, that would reproach the *Fathers work of nature*, and say, that the whole Creation is but some poor contemptible work? And would you not think him unworthy the name of a Christian, that hath contemptible thoughts of the *Sons Redemption*, as if we could be saved as well without a Saviour, or as if it were but some poor and trivial commodity that Christ had purchased us? I know you would confess the misery of that man, that believeth no better in the *Father*, and the *Son*. And how comes it to pass that you think not of your own misery, that believe no better in the *holy Ghost?* Do not you debase the *Sanctifying* office of the holy Spirit, when you shew us your knowledge, and parts and outward duties, and civility, and tell us that *these* are the work of sanctification: What is Sanctification but such a thing as this? Why? *Holiness is a new Life and Spirit in us*: and these that you talk of are but a few flowers that are stuck upon a Corps to keep it a while from stinking among men, till death convey it to a burial in Hell. O Sirs, *Sanctification* is another kind of matter then the forsaking of some of your fouler vices, and speaking well of a Godly life. It is not the patching up of the *Old* Man, but the Creating of a *New* Man. I will give you warning therefore from God, that you think not basely of the work of the holy Ghost; and that you think no more to be saved without the *sanctifying work of the Spirit*, then without the *redeeming work of the Son*, or *Creation*, *Government*, or *Love of the Father*. Sanctification must turn the very bent and stream of heart and life to God, to Christ, to Heaven: it must mortifie Carnal *Self*, and the world to you: it must make you a people Devoted, Consecrated, and Resigned up to God, with all that you have: it must make all sin odious to you, and make God the Love and Desire of your Souls: so that it must give you a new Heart, a new End, a new Master, a New Law, and a new Conversation. This is

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that noble Heavenly work which the Holy Ghost hath vouchsafed to make the business of his office: To slight and dispise this, is to slight and despise the holy Ghost: To refuse this, is to refuse the holy Ghost: and not to believe in him: to be without this work, is to be without the holy Ghost: and *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. The *holy Catholick Church* is composed of all through the world that have this work upon them, and therefore it is called Holy. The *Communion of Saints*, is the blessed Vital fellowship of the *Sanctified* Ones: For these only is the *Resurrection* unto blessedness, and the *life everlasting* with the Lord of life: for all others is the Resurrection of Condemnation, and the everlasting punishment.

But if the other two Articles of our Faith have been so denied by the blind, it is less wonder if this be so. Some Hereticks denied God to be the Creator of the world; and because they saw so much evil in the world, they said that it was made by Devils or evil Angels (who indeed made the sin, but not the world,) So dealt the Jews by the Son, and the Second Article of our Faith: The Sacrifice of Bulls and Goats and such Beasts, was all the Sacrifice for sin that they believed in. And thus dealt the multitude of the ungodly by the Spirit. Indeed they know not themselves sufficiently to know the need and worth of Sanctification. They are too whole to value the skill and care of Christ or the holy Ghost. The insensibility of spiritual death and misery, and thinking too lightly of Original Corruption, and too well of our depraved nature, is both the cause of many of the Heresies of the learned, and of the common contempt of Christ and the Spirit, and recovering grace, in all the unregenerate. For it is not possible that men should have any deeper sence of the need or worth of the remedy, then they have of the greatness of their sin and misery.

O Sirs, did we not come upon this great disadvantage to you, that we speak to dead men, that have indeed a natural life, which doth but take pleasure in their spiritual death, how confidently should we expect to prevail with you all! But while you think lightly of your disease, we can expect no better, but that you think as lightly of Christ and holiness, and all the means that tend to your recovery, and think of the new man, as the Poets fabled of the Promethean race, that it grows out of the earth (of your own poor, sorry purposes and performances) like ordinary plants.

Truly Sirs, I have lead you even as far as I can: and what more to say to you, or what more to do for you, to procure your Conversion I do not know. If it had been in my power to have shewed you Heaven and Hell it self, that you might better have known the matters that we speak of, I think I should have done it. But God will not have men live by sence in this life, but by Faith. If I could but help you all to such a knowledge and apprehension of these invisible things, as the worst of you shall have as soon as you are dead, then I should make but little doubt of your Conversion and Salvation. Sure if you had but such a light, the force of it would so work upon you, that before I went out of the Congregation, you would all cry out that you are resolved to be new creatures. But though this be beyond my power, and though I cannot shew you your great and wonderful things that every eye here must shortly see: yet I come not to you without a glass of Gods own making, and in that glass you may see them. There if you have but an eye of Faith, you may see that God that you have so long offended, and that now so earnestly inviteth you to return: There you may see that Crucified Christ that hath opened you a way for Repentance by his Blood, and pleadeth that Blood with you for the melting of your impenitent, obstinate hearts. There you may see the odious face of sin, and the amiable face of Holiness, which is the Image of God: There you may see

book

both Heaven and Hell for all that they are invisible, and may know what will be and that to all Eternity, as well as what is.

And will not such a sight in the glass of Gods Word, serve turn to move thee presently to give up the trade of sinning, and to Resolve before thou stir for God? I am now come to the end of this part of my work; if the reading of it have brought thee to the end of thy ungodly, careless life, it will be happy for thee, and I shall so far attain the End of my labour. I have purposely put this Direction of the Necessity of Resolution in the last place, that I might leave upon thy spirit the Reasons for Resolution, that here I have laid down. And now I beseech thee Reader whoever thou art; with all the earnestness that I am able to use with thee, as ever thou wouldest scape the fruits of all thy sin, as ever thou wouldest see the face of God with Comfort, and have him thy reconciled Father in Christ; as ever thou wouldest have a saving part in Christ, and have him stand thy friend in thy extremities; as ever thou wouldest have hope in thy death, and stand on the right hand, and be justified at Judgment: as ever thou wouldest scape the day of Vengeance prepared for the unconverted, and the endless misery that will fall upon all unsanctified Souls, as sure as the Heaven is over thy Head: See that thou Resolve and Turn to God, and trifle with him no more. Away with thy old transgressions; away with thy careless, worldly life; away with thy ungodly Company; and set thy self presently to seek after thy Salvation with all thy heart, and mind, and might. I tell thee once more, that Heaven and Hell are not matters to be jested with; nor to be carelessly thought of, or spoken, or regarded. The God of Heaven stands over thee now while thou art reading all these words, and he seeth thy heart, whether thou art Resolved to turn or not. Shall he see thee read such urgent Reasons, and yet wilt not Resolve? Shall he see thee read these earnest requests,

and

and yet not Resolve? What! not come home to thy God, to thy Father, to thy Saviour, to thy self, after so long and wilful sinning? What! not to accept of Mercy, now it is even thrust into thy hands; when thou hast neglected and abused Mercy so long? O let not the Just and Jealous God stand over thee, and see thee guilty of such wickedness. If thou be a Christian, shew thy self a Christian, and use thy belief, and come to God. If thou be a man, shew thy self a man, and use thy Reason, and come away to God. I beseech thee read over and over again the Reason that I have here offered thee, and judge whether a reasonable man should resist them, and delay an hour to come into God. I that am now writing these lines of exhortation to thee, must shortly meet thee at the bar of Christ. I do now adjure thee, and charge thee in the Name of the living God, that thou do not thy self and me that wrong, as to make me lose this labour with thee, and that thou put me not to come in as a witness against thee to thy confusion and condemnation. Resolve therefore presently in the strength of Christ, and strike an unchangeable Covenant with him; Get thee to thy knees, and bewail with tears thy former life, and deliver up thy self wholly now to Christ; and never break this Covenant more.

If thou lay by the Book, and go away the same, and no perswasion will do any good upon thee, but unholy thou wilt still be, and sensual, and worldly still thou wilt be; I call thy Conscience to witness, that thou wast warned of the evil that is near thee, and Conscience shall obey this call, and bear me witness whether thou wilt or not: And this Book, which thou hast read, which I intended for thy Conversion and Salvation, shall be a witness against thee: Though age or fire consume the leaves and lines of it, yet God and Conscience shall bring it to thy memory, and thou shalt then be the more confounded to think what Reasons, and earnest perswasions thou didst reject in so plain, so great, and necessary a case.

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But if the Holy Ghost will now become thy Tutor, and at once both put this Book into thy hand, and his Heavenly light into thy understanding, and his life into thy heart, and effectually perswade thee to Resolve and Turn, how happy wilt thou be to all Eternity? Make no more words on it; but answer my request, as thou wouldest do if thou wert in a burning fire, and I intreated thee to come out. Thou hast long enough grieved Christ and his Spirit, and long enough grieved thy friends and Teachers: Resolve this hour, and Rejoyce then that thou hast grieved; and now grieve the Devil, that thou hast hitherto rejoyced; and hereafter grieve the wicked, and thy own deceitful flesh, whose sinful desires thou hast hitherto followed: And if thou also grieve thy self a little while, by that moderate sorrow that thy sin hath made necessary for thee, it will be but a preparative to thy endless joyes, and the day is promised, and coming apace, when *Satan* that thou turnest from, shall trouble thee no more, and God that thou turnest to, shall wipe away all tears from thy eyes. And if the reading of this Book, may be but a means of so blessed an End, as God shall have the Glory, so when *Christ cometh to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that do believe* (2 Thes. 1. 10) both thou and I shall then partake of the Communication of his Glory; if so be that I be sincere in writing, and thou and I sincere in obeying the Doctrine of this Book. *Amen.*

July 5. 1657.

FINIS.

Books written by the Reverend Mr. John Howe, *Printed for* Tho. Parkhurst.

A Funeral Sermon on the Death of that Pious Gentlewoman Mrs. *Judith Hammond*, late Wife of the Reverend Mr. *George Hammond*, Minister of the Gospel in *London*.

Of Thoughfulness for the Morrow. With an Appendix concerning the immoderate Desire of foreknowing things to come.

Of Charity in Reference to other Mens Sins.

The Redeemer's Tears wept over lost Souls, in a Treatise on *Luke* 19. 41, 42. With an Appendix, wherein somewhat is occasionally Discoursed concerning the Sin against the Holy Ghost, and how God is said to will the Salvation of them that Perish.

A Sermon directing what we are to do, after a strict Enquiry whether or no we truly Love God.

A Funeral Sermon for Mrs *Ester Sampson*, the late Wife of *Henry Sampson*, Doctor of Physick, who Died *Nov.* 24. 1689.

The Carnality of Religious Contention. In two Sermons, Preach'd at the *Merchants Lecture* in *Broad-street*.

A Calm and Sober Enquiry concerning the Possibility of a Trinity in the Godhead.

A Letter to a Friend, concerning a Postscript to the Defence of Dr. *Sherlock*'s Notion of the Trinity in Unity, relating to the Calm and Sober Enquiry upon the same Subject.

A View of that Part of the late Considerations Addrest to *H. H.* about the Trinity. Which concerns the Sober Enquiry, on that Subject.

A Sermon Preach'd on the Late Day of Thanksgiving, *Decem.* 2. 1697. To which is added Dr. *Bates* Congratulatory Speech to the King.